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The Riddle

By Arthur H. Adams

I STOOD beneath the Night's unmoved expanse.
And lo! upon the fallow darkness sown
Like seeds, the stars; or bright confetti thrown
Upon the dusty floor of Circumstance;
Or hung, a jewelled necklace, to enhance
The throat of Night! And to some Power unknown
I cried, "Is Man then but a mote alone
Caught in a falling rain-drop—dust of Chance?"
Yet in the desert of this sterile Space
A living moss upon a crumbling clod
Tenacious finds a brief abiding-place:
An Insignificance that has its dream—
A mind that reads a meaning in the scheme—
A heart whose craving dares create a God!

The Shadow

By Gilmour Beaton

O THAT we two might gather up our lives
In one long kiss, in whose still ecstasy
Our souls might pass for ever from the gyves
Of severing chance to endless unity.
For still, though in the sweet abandonment
Of great love loved again you quiver close,
And I in liquid depths of wonderment
In your eyes find the trust I there repose,
O'erhangs the shade of dark fatality
That cruelly may rock the stablest mind.
Ah then, one moment add to the amount
Of that short bliss we steal from time, to count
Amid those precious timeless things that bind
This fleeting life to immortality.

Comradeship

By Wilson Benington

HOWE'ER we flatter with ourselves, 'tis plain
Ourselves are what we love, and howsomuch
We lean lame virtue on the potent crutch
Of adoration, holding in disdain
Self-love, and seek with flagellations vain
Self-conquest,—do but put it to the touch,
Our love is for ourselves; for we are such
That, losing life for love, new life we gain.
You are to me as nature, and I come
From poorly playing that uneasy *rôle*,
Called life, to breathe the ever open air
Of candid comradeship, truth's mountain-home;
For in the love of you alone I dare
Be what I am and save a stifling soul.

To Harriet Shelley

By George Herbert Clarke

As some blithe schooner sailing on the breast
    Of ocean, thrilled by the sheer voyaging,
    Heedless that wave and wind must hourly bring
Her near and nearer to the haven-rest;—
Yard-arms akimbo, carelessness confest,
    Dancing through worlds of water, white of wing
    And light of heart;—finds harbour, wondering
Where now the roar, the rigour, and the zest:—
Creature of chance, so was it with thy life,
    Who knew not, hardly loved, the element
Upbearing thee, but, glad to be a wife,
    Took little thought *whither* the compass bent,—
Crossing the troubled deep of Shelley's spirit,
The silent Dark thereafter to inherit!

At the Taj-Mahal: the Tomb and the Garden of Ârjamund the Beloved

By Geoffrey Cookson

A BREATH, a shadow, chills the marble dome,
Changing the rose-blush to sepulchral clay;
Quenched are heaven's seas, that broke in golden foam,
And frozen, ere it fell, their airy spray.
The colours on the water fade away;
The long, bright mirrors, flashing blue and gold,
Are cumbered with the ruins of the day;
And stars, that give no light, dawn dim and cold.
Come, O Beloved, through the warm dusk air,
While the dark cypress whispers to the rose,
And the young moon a-down thy glimmering stair
Her shadow, like a shaft of jasper, throws:
And you, vain human shadows, hush your tread,
And leave her garden to the deathless dead.

Warranty

By John Drinkwater

FULL-SAILED upon imagination's tide,
I was as God; I compassed time and space
In one swift glance; the sorrows on the face
Of man scorched through me; my creation cried
For word whereby I should be justified,
For news of my most secret thoughts of grace,
And then was I afraid in my proud place,
Having no word though man was crucified.
Then some forgotten virtue that had passed
Out of my breath to man flowed back to me,
The warrior hope that was his holy bread,
And I was patient then and comforted,
Knowing that things desired should surely be,
That all he sought I must bestow at last.

Wayside Sophistry

By Philip H. Fish

Of Creeds and Faiths 'tis said there are ten score,—
And yet, for many folks they prove too few,—
But, Brother, an there were a thousand more,
The desert would suffice for me and you;
For Truth is manifest on silent plains,
As twilight steals athwart the caravan,—
And Hope, engendered by swift rainbow stains,
Dwells on the glaciers of Thian Shan.
So leave the foolish priests to drone their psalms,—
The power of Eblis still remains the same,—
Forsake all pundits, have recourse to charms
Should wives prove barren, or a horse go lame:
Trust me,—I know a skilled astrologer,
In far Aleppo, off the Street of Myrrh.

Consolation

By F. S. Flint

WHAT if my life be cast in barren ways,
Between brick walls, where flowers do not grow,
Where golden fields of corn wave not nor glow,
And cold unfriendly faces meet my gaze—
There still are trees in London: in the maze
Of noisy streets I meet them as I go,
Dejected and bewildered, to and fro,
And my heart leaps and with rejoicing says:
Still have I golden books where men have limned
The flowers of their spirit and its songs—
Birds singing in the branches of my mind;
And, O my love, your image is undimmed,
While chiming in my soul like silver gongs
Your voice and laughter through its silence wind.

Any Lover to Any Mistress

By Hamilton Fyfe

Your curving lips were made for kisses, Sweet:
  Your slim, firm fingers to be held in mine:
Your soft, strong arms around my neck to twine:
  Your heart beneath its blue-veined breast to beat
  In sudden, short-lived ecstasies: your feet
To dance a Pagan measure of pure joy:
  Your tingling, tender body very meet
For service exquisite in Love's employ.
And God who made that body for delight
  Should there have stayed, and left a perfect thing,
    Nor added to your loveliness a soul.
So had He spared you sharpest suffering,
  Dark waves of pain that o'er your spirit roll,
    And sobs which shake you through the lonely night.

Rose and Amaranth

By Stephen Southwold

When I do see the laggard sun uprise,
Red herald of the death of sullied night;
Scattering the largess of a victor's prize
With unthrift hand, grim usury's delight;
I muse on all the pomp, and worldly state;
The brave rich trappings of dead yesterday,
That Time, in jocund partnership with Fate,
Has levelled with his scythe, and swept away.
Scarce still the dust of ruin, ere in turn
New glories rise, with all the livery
Of youthful splendour, which is fain to spurn
The destined empire of posterity.
Yet ever day from night the day has won;
And night, unknightly, slays the dying sun.

Overruled: A Dramatic Study*

By Bernard Shaw

A lady and gentleman are sitting together on a chesterfield in a retired corner of the lounge of a seaside hotel. It is a summer night: the French window behind them stands open. The terrace without overlooks a moonlit harbor. The lounge is dark. The chesterfield, upholstered in silver grey, and the two figures on it in evening dress, catch the light from an arc lamp somewhere; but the walls, covered with a dark green paper, are in gloom. There are two stray chairs, one on each side. On the gentleman's right, behind him up near the window, is an unused fireplace. Opposite it on the lady's left is a door. The gentleman is on the lady's right.

The lady is very attractive, with a musical voice and soft appealing manners. She is young: that is, one feels sure that she is under thirty-five and over twenty-four. The gentleman does not look much older. He is rather handsome, and has ventured as far in the direction of poetic dandyism in the arrangement of his hair as any man who is not a professional artist can afford to in England. He is obviously very much in love with the lady, and is, in fact, yielding to an irresistible impulse to throw his arms round her.

THE LADY. Dont—oh dont be horrid. Please, Mr. Lunn [*she rises from the lounge and retreats behind it*]! Promise me you wont be horrid.

GREGORY LUNN. I'm not being horrid, Mrs. Juno. I'm not going to be horrid. I love you: thats all. I'm extraordinarily happy.

MRS. JUNO. You will really be good?

GREGORY. I'll be whatever you wish me to be. I tell you I love you. I love loving you. I dont want to be tired and sorry, as I should be if I were to be horrid. I dont want you to be tired and sorry. Do come and sit down again.

MRS. JUNO [*coming back to her seat*] Youre sure you dont want anything you oughtnt to?

GREGORY. Quite sure. I only want you [*she recoils*]. Dont

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be alarmed: I l i k e wanting you. As long as I have a want, I have a reason for living. Satisfaction is death.

MRS. JUNO. Yes; but the impulse to commit suicide is sometimes irresistible.

GREGORY. Not with you.

MRS. JUNO. What!

GREGORY. Oh, it sounds uncomplimentary; but it isnt really. Do you know why half the couples who find themselves situated as we are now behave horridly?

MRS. JUNO. Because they cant help it if they let things go too far.

GREGORY. Not a bit of it. It's because they have nothing else to do, and no other way of entertaining each other. You dont know what it is to be alone with a woman who has little beauty and less conversation. What is a man to do? She cant talk interestingly; and if he talks that way himself she doesnt understand him. He cant look at her: if he does, he only finds out that she isnt beautiful. Before the end of five minutes they are both hideously bored. Theres only one thing that can save the situation; and thats what you call being horrid. With a beautiful, witty, kind woman, theres no time for such follies. It's so delightful to look at her, to listen to her voice, to hear all she has to say, that nothing else happens. That is why the woman who is supposed to have a thousand lovers seldom has one; whilst the stupid, graceless animals of women have dozens.

MRS. JUNO. I wonder! It's quite true that when one feels in danger one talks like mad to stave it off, even when one doesnt quite want to stave it off.

GREGORY. One never does quite want to stave it off. Danger is delicious. But death isnt. We court the danger; but the real delight is in escaping, after all.

MRS. JUNO. I dont think we'll talk about it any more. Danger is all very well when you d o escape; but sometimes one doesnt. I tell you frankly I dont feel as safe as you do—if you really do.

GREGORY. But surely you can do as you please without injuring anyone, Mrs. Juno. That is the whole secret of your extraordinary charm for me.

MRS. JUNO. I dont understand.

GREGORY. Well, I hardly know how to begin to explain. But the root of the matter is that I am what people call a good man.

MRS. JUNO. I thought so until you began making love to me.

GREGORY. But you knew I loved you all along.

MRS. JUNO. Yes, of course; but I depended on you not to tell me so; because I thought you were good. Your blurting it out spoilt it. And it was wicked besides.

GREGORY. Not at all. You see, it's a great many years since Ive been able to allow myself to fall in love. I know lots of charming women; but the worst of it is, theyre all married. Women dont become charming, to my taste, until theyre fully developed; and by that time, if theyre really nice, theyre snapped up and married. And then, because I am a good man, I have to place a limit to my regard for them. I may be fortunate enough to gain friendship and even very warm affection from them; but my loyalty to their husbands and their hearths and their happiness obliges me to draw a line and not overstep it. Of course I value such affectionate regard very highly indeed. I am surrounded with women who are most dear to me. But every one of them has a post sticking up, if I may put it that way, with the inscription: Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted. How we all loathe that notice! In every lovely garden, in every dell full of primroses, on every fair hillside, we meet that confounded board; and there is always a gamekeeper round the corner. But what is that to the horror of meeting it on every beautiful woman, and knowing that there is a husband round the corner? I have had this accursed board standing between me and every dear and desirable woman until I thought I had lost the power of letting myself fall really and wholeheartedly in love.

MRS. JUNO. Wasnt there a widow?

GREGORY. No. Widows are extraordinarily scarce in modern society. Husbands live longer than they used to; and even when they do die, their widows have a string of names down for their next.

MRS. JUNO. Well, what about the young girls?

GREGORY. Oh, who cares for young girls? Theyre unsympathetic. Theyre beginners. They dont attract me. I'm afraid of them.

MRS. JUNO. Thats the correct thing to say to a woman of my age. But it doesnt explain why you seem to have put your scruples in your pocket when you met me.

GREGORY. Surely thats quite clear. I—

MRS. JUNO. No: please dont explain. I dont want to know. I take your word for it. Besides, it doesnt matter now. Our voyage is over; and to-morrow I start for the north to my poor father's place.

GREGORY [*surprised*] Your poor father! I thought he was alive.

MRS. JUNO. So he is. What made you think he wasnt?

GREGORY. You said your poor father.

MRS. JUNO. Oh, thats a trick of mine. Rather a silly trick, I suppose; but theres something pathetic to me about men: I find myself calling them poor So-and-So when theres nothing whatever the matter with them.

GREGORY [*who has listened in growing alarm*] But—I—is? —wa—? Oh Lord!

MRS. JUNO. Whats the matter?

GREGORY. Nothing.

MRS. JUNO. Nothing! [*Rising anxiously*] Nonsense: youre ill.

GREGORY. No. It was something about your late husband—

MRS. JUNO. My late husband! What do you mean? [*Clutching him, horror-stricken*] Dont tell me he's dead.

GREGORY [*rising, equally appalled*] Dont tell me he's alive.

MRS. JUNO. Oh, dont frighten me like this. Of course he's alive—unless youve heard anything.

GREGORY. The first day we met—on the boat—you spoke to me of your poor dear husband.

MRS. JUNO [*releasing him, quite reassured*] Is that all?

GREGORY. Well, afterwards you called him poor Tops. Always poor Tops, or poor dear Tops. What could I think?

MRS. JUNO [*sitting down again*] I wish you hadnt given me such a shock about him; for I havnt been treating him at all well. Neither have you.

GREGORY [*relapsing into his seat, overwhelmed*] And you mean to tell me youre not a widow!

MRS. JUNO. Gracious, no. I'm not in black.

GREGORY. Then I have been behaving like a blackguard! I have broken my promise to my mother. I shall never have an easy conscience again.

MRS. JUNO. I'm sorry. I thought you knew.

GREGORY. You thought I was a libertine?

MRS. JUNO. No: of course I shouldnt have spoken to you if I had thought that. I thought you liked me, but that you knew, and would be good.

GREGORY [*stretching his hands towards her breast*] I thought the burden of being good had fallen from my soul at last. I saw nothing there but a bosom to rest on: the bosom of a lovely woman of whom I could dream without guilt. What do I see now?

MRS. JUNO. Just what you saw before.

GREGORY [*despairingly*] No, no.

MRS. JUNO. What else?

GREGORY. Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted: Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted.

MRS. JUNO. They wont if they hold their tongues. Dont be such a coward. My husband wont eat you.

GREGORY. I'm not afraid of your husband. I'm afraid of my conscience.

MRS. JUNO [*losing patience*] Well! I dont consider myself at all a badly behaved woman; for nothing has passed between us that was not perfectly nice and friendly; but really! to hear a grown-up man talking about promises to his mother!—

GREGORY [*interrupting her*] Yes, yes: I know all about that. It's not romantic: it's not Don Juan: it's not advanced; but we feel it all the same. It's far deeper in our blood and bones than all the romantic stuff. My father got into a scandal once: that was why my mother made me promise never to make love to a married woman. And now Ive done it I cant feel honest. Dont pretend to despise me or laugh at me. You feel it too. You said just now that your own conscience was uneasy when you thought of your husband. What must it be when you think of my wife?

MRS. JUNO [*rising aghast*] Your wife!!! You dont dare sit there and tell me coolly that youre a married man!

GREGORY. I never led you to believe I was unmarried.

MRS. JUNO. Oh! You never gave me the faintest hint that you had a wife.

GREGORY. I did indeed. I discussed things with you that only married people really understand.

MRS. JUNO. Oh!!

GREGORY. I thought it the most delicate way of letting you know.

MRS. JUNO. Well, you a r e a daisy, I must say. I suppose thats vulgar; but really! really!! You and your goodness! However, now weve found one another out theres only one thing to be done. Will you please go?

GREGORY [*rising slowly*] I o u g h t to go.

MRS. JUNO. Well, go.

GREGORY. Yes. Er—[*he tries to go*] I—I somehow cant. [*He sits down again helplessly*] My conscience is active: my will is paralysed. This is really dreadful. Would you mind ringing the bell and asking them to throw me out? You ought to, you know.

MRS. JUNO. What! make a scandal in the face of the whole hotel! Certainly not. Dont be a fool.

GREGORY. Yes; but I cant go.

MRS. JUNO. Then I can. Goodbye.

GREGORY [*holding her hand*] Can you really?

MRS. JUNO. Of course I—[*she wavers*] Oh dear! [*They contemplate one another helplessly*]. I cant. [*She sinks on the lounge, hand in hand with him*].

GREGORY. For heaven's sake pull yourself together. It's a question of self-control.

MRS. JUNO [*dragging her hand away and retreating to the end of the chesterfield*] No: it's a question of distance. Self-control is all very well two or three yards off, or on a ship, with everybody looking on. Dont come any nearer.

GREGORY. This is a ghastly business. I want to go away; and I cant.

MRS. JUNO. I think you ought to go [*he makes an effort; and she adds quickly*] but if you try to I shall grab you round

the neck and disgrace myself. I implore you to sit still and be nice.

GREGORY. I implore you to run away. I believe I can trust myself to let you go for your own sake. But it will break my heart.

MRS. JUNO. I dont want to break your heart. I cant bear to think of your sitting here alone. I cant bear to think of sitting alone myself somewhere else. It's so senseless—so ridiculous—when we might be so happy. I dont want to be wicked, or coarse. But I like you very much; and I do want to be affectionate and human.

GREGORY. I ought to draw a line.

MRS. JUNO. So you shall, dear. Tell me: do you really like me? I dont mean l o v e me: you might love the housemaid—

GREGORY [*vehemently*] No!

MRS. JUNO. Oh yes you might; and what does that matter, anyhow? Are you really fond of me? Are we friends—comrades? Would you be sorry if I died?

GREGORY [*shrinking*] Oh dont.

MRS. JUNO. Or was it the usual aimless man's lark: a mere shipboard flirtation?

GREGORY. Oh no, no: nothing half so bad, so vulgar, so wrong. I assure you I only meant to be agreeable. It grew on me before I noticed it.

MRS. JUNO. And you were glad to let it grow?

GREGORY. I let it grow because the board was not up.

MRS. JUNO. Bother the board! I am just as fond of Sibthorpe as—

GREGORY. Sibthorpe!

MRS. JUNO. Sibthorpe is my husband's Christian name. I oughtnt to call him Tops to you now.

GREGORY [*chuckling*] It sounded like something to drink. But I have no right to laugh at him. My Christian name is Gregory, which sounds like a powder.

MRS. JUNO [*chilled*] That is so like a man! I offer you my heart's warmest friendliest feeling; and you think of nothing but a silly joke. A quip like that makes you forget me.

GREGORY. Forget you! Oh, if only I could!

MRS. JUNO. If you could, would you?

GREGORY [*burying his shamed face in his hands*] No: I'd die first. Oh, I hate myself.

MRS. JUNO. I glory in myself. It's so jolly to be reckless. C a n a man be reckless, I wonder?

GREGORY [*straightening himself desperately*] No. I'm not reckless. I know what I'm doing: my conscience is awake. Oh, where is the intoxication of love? the delirium? the madness that makes a man think the world well lost for the woman he adores? I dont think anything of the sort: I see that it's

not worth it: I know that it's wrong: I have never in my life been cooler, more businesslike.

MRS. JUNO [*opening her arms to him*] But you cant resist me.

GREGORY. I must. I ought. [*Throwing himself into her arms*] Oh my darling, my treasure, we shall be sorry for this.

MRS. JUNO. We can forgive ourselves. Could we forgive ourselves if we let this moment slip?

GREGORY. I protest to the last. I'm against this. I have been pushed over a precipice. I'm innocent. This wild joy, this exquisite tenderness, this ascent into heaven can thrill me to the uttermost fibre of my heart [*with a gesture of ecstasy she hides her face on his shoulder*]; but it cant subdue my mind or corrupt my conscience, which still shouts to the skies that I'm not a willing party to this outrageous conduct. I repudiate the bliss with which you are filling me.

MRS. JUNO. Never mind your conscience. Tell me how happy you are.

GREGORY. No: I recall you to your duty. But oh, I will give you my life with both hands if you can tell me that you feel for me one millionth part of what I feel for you now.

MRS. JUNO. Oh yes, yes. Be satisfied with that. Ask for no more. Let me go.

GREGORY. I cant. I have no will. Something stronger than either of us is in command here. Nothing on earth or in heaven can part us now. You know that, dont you?

MRS. JUNO. Oh, dont make me say it. Of course I know. Nothing—not life nor death nor shame nor a n y t h i n g can part us.

A MATTER-OF-FACT MALE VOICE IN THE CORRIDOR. All right. This must be it.

The two recover with a violent start; release one another; and spring back to opposite sides of the lounge.

GREGORY. That did it.

MRS. JUNO [*in a thrilling whisper*] Sh-sh-sh! That was my husband's voice.

GREGORY. Impossible: it's only our guilty fancy.

A WOMAN'S VOICE. This is the way to the lounge. I know it.

GREGORY. Great Heaven! we're both mad. Thats my wife's voice.

MRS. JUNO. Ridiculous! Oh, we're dreaming it all. We—[*the door opens; and Sibthorpe Juno appears in the roseate glow of the corridor (which happens to be papered in pink) with Mrs. Lunn, like Tannhäuser in the hill of Venus. He is a fussily energetic little man, who gives himself an air of gallantry by greasing the points of his moustaches and dressing very carefully. She is a tall, imposing, handsome, languid woman, with flashing dark eyes and long lashes. They make for the*

chesterfield, not noticing the two palpitating figures blotted against the walls in the gloom. The figures flit away noiselessly through the window and disappear].

JUNO [*officiously*] Ah: here we are. [*He leads the way to the sofa*]. Sit down: I'm sure youre tired. [*She sits*]. Thats right. [*He sits beside her on her left*]. Hullo! [*he rises*] this sofa's quite warm.

MRS. LUNN [*bored*] Is it? I dont notice it. I expect the sun's been on it.

JUNO. I felt it quite distinctly: I'm more thinly clad than you. [*He sits down again, and proceeds, with a sigh of satisfaction*] What a relief to get off the ship and have a private room! Thats the worst of a ship. Youre under observation all the time.

MRS. LUNN: But why not?

JUNO. Well, of course theres no reason: at least I suppose not. But, you know, part of the romance of a journey is that a man keeps imagining that something might happen; and he cant do that if there are a lot of people about and it simply cant happen.

MRS. LUNN. Mr. Juno: romance is all very well on board ship; but when your foot touches the soil of England theres an end of it.

JUNO. No: believe me, thats a foreigner's mistake: we are the most romantic people in the world, we English. Why, my very presence here is a romance.

MRS. LUNN [*faintly ironical*] Indeed?

JUNO. Yes. Youve guessed, of course, that I'm a married man.

MRS. LUNN. Oh, thats all right. I'm a married woman.

JUNO. Thank Heaven for that! To my English mind, passion is not real passion without guilt. I am a red-blooded man, Mrs. Lunn: I cant help it. The tragedy of my life is that I married, when quite young, a woman I simply couldnt help being very fond of. I longed for a guilty passion: for the real thing: the wicked thing; and yet I couldnt care twopence for any other woman when my wife was about. Year after year went by: I felt my youth slipping away without ever having had a romance in my life; for marriage is all very well; but it isnt romance. Theres nothing wrong in it, you see.

MRS. LUNN. Poor man! How you must have suffered!

JUNO. No: that was what was so tame about it. I w a n t e d to suffer. You get so sick of being happily married. It's always the happy marriages that break up. At last my wife and I agreed that we ought to take a holiday.

MRS. LUNN. Hadnt you holidays every year?

JUNO. Oh, the seaside and so on! Thats not what we meant. We meant a holiday from one another.

MRS. LUNN. How very odd!

JUNO. She said it was an excellent idea; that domestic felicity was making us perfectly idiotic; that she wanted a holiday too. So we agreed to go round the world in opposite directions. I started for Suez on the day she sailed for New York.

MRS. LUNN [*suddenly becoming attentive*] Thats precisely what Gregory and I did. Now I wonder did he want a holiday from me! What he said was that he wanted the delight of meeting me after a long absence.

JUNO. Could anything be more romantic than that? Would anyone else than an Englishman have thought of it? I daresay my temperament seems tame to your boiling southern blood—

MRS. LUNN. My what!

JUNO. Your southern blood. Dont you remember how you told me, that night in the saloon when I sang "Farewell and adieu to you dear Spanish ladies," that you were by birth a lady of Spain? Your splendid Andalusian beauty speaks for itself.

MRS. LUNN. Stuff! I was born in Gibraltar. My father was Captain Jenkins. In the artillery.

JUNO [*ardently*] It is climate and not race that determines the temperament. The fiery sun of Spain blazed on your cradle; and it rocked to the roar of British cannon.

MRS. LUNN. What eloquence! It reminds me of my husband when he was in love—before we were married. Are you in love?

JUNO. Yes; and with the same woman.

MRS. LUNN. Well, of course, I didnt suppose you were in love with two women.

JUNO. I dont think you quite understand. I meant that I am in love with you.

MRS. LUNN [*relapsing into deepest boredom*] Oh, that! Men do fall in love with me. They all seem to think me a creature with volcanic passions: I'm sure I dont know why: for all the volcanic women I know are plain little creatures with sandy hair. I dont consider human volcanoes respectable. And I'm so tired of the subject! Our house is always full of women who are in love with my husband and men who are in love with me. We encourage it because it's pleasant to have company.

JUNO. And is your husband as insensible as yourself?

MRS. LUNN. Oh, Gregory's not insensible: very far from it: but I am the only woman in the world for him.

JUNO. But you? Are you really as insensible as you say you are?

MRS. LUNN. I never said anything of the kind. I'm not at all insensible by nature; but (I dont know whether youve noticed it) I am what people call rather a fine figure of a woman.

JUNO [*passionately*] Noticed it! Oh, Mrs. Lunn! Have I been able to notice anything else since we met?

MRS. LUNN. There you go, like all the rest of them! I ask you, how do you expect a woman to keep up what you call her sensibility when this sort of thing has happened to her about three times a week ever since she was seventeen? It used to upset me and terrify me at first. Then I got rather a taste for it. It came to a climax with Gregory: that was why I married him. Then it became a mild lark, hardly worth the trouble. After that I found it valuable once or twice as a spinal tonic when I was run down; but now it's an unmitigated bore. I dont mind your declaration: I daresay it gives you a certain pleasure to make it. I quite understand that you adore me; but (if you dont mind) I'd rather you didnt keep on saying so.

JUNO. Is there then no hope for me?

MRS. LUNN. Oh yes. Gregory has an idea that married women keep lists of the men theyll marry if they become widows. I'll put your name down, if that will satisfy you.

JUNO. Is the list a long one?

MRS. LUNN. Do you mean the real list? Not the one I shew to Gregory: there are hundreds of names on that; but the little private list that he'd better not see?

JUNO. Oh, will you really put me on that? Say you will.

MRS. LUNN. Well, perhaps I will. [*He kisses her hand*]. Now dont begin abusing the privilege.

JUNO. May I call you by your Christian name?

MRS. LUNN. No: it's too long. You cant go about calling a woman Seraphita.

JUNO [*ecstatically*] Seraphita!

MRS. LUNN. I used to be called Sally at home; but when I married a man named Lunn, of course that became ridiculous. Thats my one little pet joke. Call me Mrs. Lunn for short. And change the subject, or I shall go to sleep.

JUNO. I cant change the subject. For me there is no other subject. Why else have you put me on your list?

MRS. LUNN. Because youre a solicitor. Gregory's a solicitor. I'm accustomed to my husband being a solicitor and telling me things he oughtnt to tell anybody.

JUNO [*ruefully*] Is that all? Oh, I cant believe that the voice of love has ever thoroughly awakened you.

MRS. LUNN. No: it sends me to sleep. [*Juno appeals against this by an amorous demonstration*]. It's no use, Mr. Juno: I'm hopelessly respectable: the Jenkinses always were. Dont you realize that unless most women were like that, the world couldnt go on as it does?

JUNO [*darkly*] You think it goes on respectably; but I can tell you as a solicitor—

MRS. LUNN. Stuff! Of course all the disreputable people

who get into trouble go to you, just as all the sick people go to the doctors; but most people never go to a solicitor.

JUNO [*rising, with a growing sense of injury*] Look here, Mrs. Lunn: do you think a man's heart is a potato? or a turnip? or a ball of knitting wool? that you can throw it away like this?

MRS. LUNN. I dont throw away balls of knitting wool. A man's heart seems to me much like a sponge: it sops up dirty water as well as clean.

JUNO. I have never been treated like this in my life. Here am I, a married man, with a most attractive wife: a wife I adore, and who adores me, and has never as much as looked at any other man since we were married. I come and throw all this at your feet. I! I, a solicitor! braving the risk of your husband putting me into the divorce court and making me a beggar and an outcast! I do this for your sake. And you go on as if I were making no sacrifice: as if I had told you it's a fine evening, or asked you to have a cup of tea. It's not human. It's not right. Love has its rights as well as respectability [*he sits down again, aloof and sulky*].

MRS. LUNN. Nonsense! Here! heres a flower [*she gives him one*]. Go and dream over it until you feel hungry. Nothing brings people to their senses like hunger.

JUNO [*contemplating the flower without rapture*] What good's this?

MRS. LUNN [*snatching it from him*] Oh! you dont love me a bit.

JUNO. Yes I do. Or at least I did. But I'm an Englishman; and I think you ought to respect the conventions of English life.

MRS. LUNN. But I am respecting them; and youre not.

JUNO. Pardon me. I may be doing wrong; but I'm doing it in a proper and customary manner. You may be doing right; but youre doing it in an unusual and questionable manner. I am not prepared to put up with that. I can stand being badly treated: I'm no baby, and can take care of myself with anybody. And of course I can stand being well treated. But the one thing I cant stand is being unexpectedly treated. It's outside my scheme of life. So come now! youve got to behave naturally and straightforwardly with me. You can leave husband and child, home, friends, and country, for my sake, and come with me to some southern isle—or say South America—where we can be all in all to one another. Or you can tell your husband and let him jolly well punch my head if he can. But I'm damned if I'm going to stand any eccentricity. It's not respectable.

GREGORY [*coming in from the terrace and advancing with dignity to his wife's end of the chesterfield*] Will you have

the goodness, sir, in addressing this lady, to keep your temper and refrain from using profane language?

MRS. LUNN [*rising, delighted*] Gregory! Darling [*she enfolds him in a copious embrace*]!

JUNO [*rising*] You make love to another man to my face!

MRS. LUNN. Why, he's my husband.

JUNO. That takes away the last rag of excuse for such conduct. A nice world it would be if married people were to carry on their endearments before everybody!

GREGORY. This is ridiculous. What the devil business is it of yours what passes between my wife and myself? Youre not her husband, are you?

JUNO. Not at present; but I'm on the list. I'm her prospective husband: youre only her actual one. I'm the anticipation: youre the disappointment.

MRS. LUNN. Oh, my Gregory is not a disappointment. [*Fondly*] Are you, dear?

GREGORY. You just wait, my pet. I'll settle this chap for you. [*He disengages himself from her embrace, and faces Juno. She sits down placidly*]. You call me a disappointment, do you? Well, I suppose every husband's a disappointment. What about yourself? Dont try to look like an unmarried man. I happen to know the lady y o u disappointed. I travelled in the same ship with her; and—

JUNO. And you fell in love with her.

GREGORY [*taken aback*] Who told you that?

JUNO. Aha! you confess it. Well, if you want to know, nobody told me. Everybody falls in love with my wife.

GREGORY. And do you fall in love with everybody's wife?

JUNO. Certainly not. Only with yours.

MRS. LUNN. But whats the good of saying that, Mr. Juno? I'm married to him; and theres an end of it.

JUNO. Not at all. You can get a divorce.

MRS. LUNN. What for?

JUNO. For his misconduct with my wife.

GREGORY [*deeply indignant*] How dare you, sir, asperse the character of that sweet lady? a lady whom I have taken under my protection.

JUNO. Protection!

MRS. JUNO [*returning hastily*] Really you must be more careful what you say about me, Mr. Lunn.

JUNO. My precious! [*He embraces her*]. Pardon this betrayal of feeling; but Ive not seen my wife for several weeks; and she is very dear to me.

GREGORY. I call this cheek. Who is making love to his own wife before people now, pray?

MRS. LUNN. Wont you introduce me to your wife, Mr. Juno?

MRS. JUNO. How do you do? [*They shake hands; and Mrs. Juno sits down beside Mrs. Lunn, on her left*].

MRS. LUNN. I'm so glad to find you do credit to Gregory's taste. I'm naturally rather particular about the women he falls in love with.

JUNO [*sternly*] This is no way to take your husband's unfaithfulness. [*To Lunn*] You ought to teach your wife better. Wheres her feelings? It's scandalous.

GREGORY. What about your own conduct, pray?

JUNO. I dont defend it; and theres an end of the matter.

GREGORY. Well, upon my soul! What difference does your not defending it make?

JUNO. A fundamental difference. To serious people I may appear wicked. I dont defend myself: I a m wicked, though not bad at heart. To thoughtless people I may even appear comic. Well, laugh at me: I have given myself away. But Mrs. Lunn seems to have no opinion at all about me. She doesnt seem to know whether I'm wicked or comic. She doesnt seem to care. She has no moral sense. I say it's not right. I repeat, I have sinned; and I'm prepared to suffer.

MRS. JUNO. Have you really sinned, Tops?

MRS. LUNN [*blandly*] I dont remember your sinning. I have a shocking bad memory for trifles; but I think I should remember that—if you mean me.

JUNO [*raging*] Trifles! I have fallen in love with a monster.

GREGORY. Dont you dare call my wife a monster.

MRS. JUNO [*rising quickly and coming between them*] Please dont lose your temper, Mr. Lunn: I wont have my Tops bullied.

GREGORY. Well, then, let him not brag about sinning with my wife. [*He turns impulsively to his wife; makes her rise; and takes her proudly on his arm*]. What pretension has he to any such honor?

JUNO. I sinned in intention. [*Mrs. Juno abandons him and resumes her seat, chilled*]. I'm as guilty as if I had actually sinned. And I insist on being treated as a sinner, and not walked over as if I'd done nothing, by your wife or any other man.

MRS. LUNN. Tush! [*She sits down again contemptuously*].

JUNO [*furious*] I wont be belittled.

MRS. LUNN [*to Mrs. Juno*] I hope youll come and stay with us now that you and Gregory are such friends, Mrs. Juno.

JUNO. This insane magnanimity—

MRS. LUNN. Dont you think youve said enough, Mr. Juno? This is a matter for two women to settle. Wont you take a stroll on the beach with my Gregory while we talk it over? Gregory is a splendid listener.

JUNO. I dont think any good can come of a conversation

between Mr. Lunn and myself. We can hardly be expected to improve one another's morals. [*He passes behind the chesterfield to Mrs. Lunn's end; seizes a chair; deliberately pushes it between Gregory and Mrs. Lunn; and sits down with folded arms, resolved not to budge*].

GREGORY. Oh! Indeed! Oh, all right. If you come to that—[*he crosses to Mrs. Juno; plants a chair by her side; and sits down with equal determination*].

JUNO. Now we are both equally guilty.

GREGORY. Pardon me. I'm not guilty.

JUNO. In intention. Dont quibble. You were guilty in intention, as I was.

GREGORY. No. I should rather describe myself as being guilty in fact, but not in intention.

JUNO, MRS. JUNO, MRS. LUNN *rising and exclaiming simultaneously*: What! No, really— Gregory!

GREGORY. Yes: I maintain that I am responsible for my intentions only, and not for reflex actions over which I have no control. [*Mrs. Juno sits down, ashamed*]. I promised my mother that I would never tell a lie, and that I would never make love to a married woman. I never h a v e told a lie—

MRS. LUNN [*remonstrating*] Gregory! [*She sits down again*].

GREGORY. I say never. On many occasions I have resorted to prevarication; but on great occasions I have always told the truth. I regard this as a great occasion; and I wont be intimidated into breaking my promise. I solemnly declare that I did not know until this evening that Mrs. Juno was married. She will bear me out when I say that from that moment my intentions were strictly and resolutely honorable; though my conduct, which I could not control and am therefore not responsible for, was disgraceful—or would have been had this gentleman not walked in and begun making love to my wife under my very nose.

JUNO [*flinging himself back into his chair*] Well, I like this!

MRS. LUNN. Really, darling, theres no use in the pot calling the kettle black.

GREGORY. When you say darling, may I ask which of us you are addressing?

MRS. LUNN. I really dont know. I'm getting hopelessly confused.

JUNO. Why dont you let my wife say something? I dont think she ought to be thrust into the background like this.

MRS. LUNN. I'm sorry, I'm sure. Please excuse me, dear.

MRS. JUNO [*thoughtfully*] I dont know what to say. I must think over it. I have always been rather severe on this sort of thing; but when it came to the point I didnt behave as I

thought I should behave. I didnt intend to be wicked; but somehow or other, Nature, or whatever you choose to call it, didnt take much notice of my intentions. [*Gregory instinctively seeks her hand and presses it*]. And I really did think, Tops, that I was the only woman in the world for you.

JUNO [*cheerfully*] Oh, thats all right, my precious. Mrs. Lunn thought she was the only woman in the world for him.

GREGORY [*reflectively*] So she is, in a sort of way.

JUNO [*flaring up*] And so is my wife. Dont you set up to be a better husband than I am; for youre not. Ive owned I'm wrong. You havnt.

MRS. LUNN. Are you sorry, Gregory?

GREGORY [*perplexed*] Sorry?

MRS. LUNN. Yes, sorry. I think it's time for you to say youre sorry, and to make friends with Mr. Juno before we all dine together.

GREGORY. Seraphita: I promised my mother—

MRS. JUNO [*involuntarily*] Oh, bother your mother! [*Recovering herself*] I beg your pardon.

GREGORY. A promise is a promise. I cant tell a deliberate lie. I know I ought to be sorry; but the flat fact is that I'm not sorry. I find that in this business, somehow or other, there is a disastrous separation between my moral principles and my conduct.

JUNO. Theres nothing disastrous about it. It doesnt matter about your conduct if your principles are all right.

GREGORY. Bosh! It doesnt matter about your principles if your conduct is all right.

JUNO. But your conduct isnt all right; and my principles are.

GREGORY. Whats the good of your principles being right if they wont work?

JUNO. They will work, sir, if you exercise self-sacrifice.

GREGORY. Oh, yes: if, if, if. You know jolly well that self-sacrifice doesnt work either when you really want a thing. How much have you sacrificed yourself, pray?

MRS. LUNN. Oh, a great deal, Gregory. Dont be rude. Mr. Juno is a very nice man: he has been most attentive to me on the voyage.

GREGORY. And Mrs. Juno's a very nice woman. She oughtnt to be; but she is.

JUNO. Why oughtnt she to be a nice woman, pray?

GREGORY. I mean she oughtnt to be nice to me. And you oughtnt to be nice to my wife. And your wife oughtnt to like me. And my wife oughtnt to like you. And if they do, they oughtnt to go on liking us. And I oughtnt to like your wife; and you oughtnt to like mine; and if we do we oughtnt to go on liking them. But we do, all of us. We oughtnt; but we do.

JUNO. But, my dear boy, if we admit we are in the wrong

wheres the harm of it? We're not perfect; but as long as we keep the ideal before us—

GREGORY. How?

JUNO. By admitting we're wrong.

MRS. LUNN [*springing up, out of patience, and pacing round the lounge intolerantly*] Well, really, I must have my dinner. These two men, with their morality, and their promises to their mothers, and their admissions that they were wrong, and their sinning and suffering, and their going on at one another as if it meant anything, or as if it mattered, are getting on my nerves. [*Stooping over the back of the chesterfield to address Mrs. Juno*] If you will be so very good, my dear, as to take my sentimental husband off my hands occasionally, I shall be more than obliged to you: I'm sure you can stand more male sentimentality than I can. [*Sweeping away to the fireplace*] I, on my part, will do my best to amuse your excellent husband when you find him tiresome.

JUNO. I call this polyandry.

MRS. LUNN. I wish you wouldnt call innocent things by offensive names, Mr. Juno. What do you call your own conduct?

JUNO [*rising*] I tell you I have admitted—

GREGORY	*together*	Whats the good of keeping on at that?
MRS. LUNN		Oh, not that again, please.
MRS. JUNO		Tops: I'll scream if you say that again.

JUNO. Oh, well, if you wont listen to me—! [*He sits down again*].

MRS. JUNO. What is the position now exactly? [*Mrs. Lunn shrugs her shoulders and gives up the conundrum. Gregory looks at Juno. Juno turns away his head huffily*]. I mean, what are we going to do?

MRS. LUNN. What would you advise, Mr. Juno?

JUNO. I should advise you to divorce your husband.

MRS. LUNN. You want me to drag your wife into court and disgrace her?

JUNO. No: I forgot that. Excuse me; but for the moment I thought I was married to you.

GREGORY. I think we had better let bygones be bygones. [*To Mrs. Juno, very tenderly*] You will forgive me, wont you? Why should you let a moment's forgetfulness embitter all our future life?

MRS. JUNO. But it's Mrs. Lunn who has to forgive you.

GREGORY. Oh, dash it, I forgot. This is getting ridiculous.

MRS. LUNN. I'm getting hungry.

MRS. JUNO. Do you really mind, Mrs. Lunn?

MRS. LUNN. My dear Mrs. Juno, Gregory is one of those terribly uxorious men who ought to have ten wives. If any

really nice woman will take him off my hands for a day or two occasionally, I shall be greatly obliged to her.

GREGORY. Seraphita: you cut me to the soul [*he weeps*].

MRS. LUNN. Serve you right! Youd think it quite proper if it cut me to the soul.

MRS. JUNO. Am I to take Sibthorpe off your hands too, Mrs. Lunn?

JUNO [*rising*] Do you suppose I'll allow this?

MRS. JUNO. Youve admitted that youve done wrong, Tops. Whats the use of your allowing or not allowing after that?

JUNO. I do not admit that I have done wrong. I admit that what I did was wrong.

GREGORY. Can you explain the distinction?

JUNO. It's quite plain to anyone but an imbecile. If you tell me Ive done something wrong you insult me. But if you say that something that I did is wrong you simply raise a question of morals. I tell you flatly if you say I did anything wrong you will have to fight me. In fact, I think we ought to fight anyhow. I dont particularly want to; but I feel that England expects us to.

GREGORY. I wont fight. If you beat me my wife would share my humiliation. If I beat you, she would sympathize with you and loathe me for my brutality.

MRS. LUNN. Not to mention that as we are human beings and not reindeer or barndoor fowl, if two men presumed to fight for us we couldnt decently ever speak to either of them again.

GREGORY. Besides, neither of us could beat the other, as we neither of us know how to fight. We should only blacken each others eyes and make fools of ourselves.

JUNO. I dont admit that. Every Englishman can use his fists.

GREGORY. Youre an Englishman. Can you use yours?

JUNO. I presume so: I never tried.

MRS. JUNO. You never told me you couldnt fight, Tops. I thought you were an accomplished boxer.

JUNO. My precious: I never gave you any ground for such a belief.

MRS. JUNO. You always talked as if it were a matter of course. You spoke with the greatest contempt of men who didnt kick other men downstairs.

JUNO. Well, I cant kick Mr. Lunn downstairs. We're on the ground floor.

MRS. JUNO. You could throw him into the harbor.

GREGORY. Do you want me to be thrown into the harbor?

MRS. JUNO. No: I only want to show Tops that he's making a ghastly fool of himself.

GREGORY [*rising and prowling disgustedly between the chesterfield and the windows*] We're all making fools of ourselves.

JUNO [*following him*] Well, if we're not to fight, I must insist at least on your never speaking to my wife again.

GREGORY. Does my speaking to your wife do you any harm?

JUNO. No. But it's the proper course to take. [*Emphatically*] We m u s t behave with some sort of decency.

MRS. LUNN. And are you never going to speak to me again, Mr. Juno?

JUNO. I'm prepared to promise never to do so. I think your husband has a right to demand that. Then if I speak to you after, it will not be his fault. It will be a breach of my promise; and I shall not attempt to defend my conduct.

GREGORY [*facing him*] I shall talk to your wife as often as she'll let me.

MRS. JUNO. I have no objection to your speaking to me, Mr. Lunn.

JUNO. Then I shall take steps.

GREGORY. What steps?

JUNO. Steps. Measures. Proceedings. Such steps as may seem advisable.

MRS. LUNN [*to Mrs. Juno*] Can y o u r husband afford a scandal, Mrs. Juno?

MRS. JUNO. No.

MRS. LUNN. Neither can mine.

GREGORY. Mrs. Juno: I'm very sorry I let you in for all this. I dont know how it is that we contrive to make feelings like ours, which seem to me to be beautiful and sacred feelings, and which lead to such interesting and exciting adventures, end in vulgar squabbles and degrading scenes.

JUNO. I decline to admit that my conduct has been vulgar or degrading.

GREGORY. I promised—

JUNO. Look here, old chap: I dont say a word against your mother; and I'm sorry she's dead; but really, you know, most women are mothers; and they all die some time or other; yet that doesnt make them infallible authorities on morals, does it?

GREGORY. I was about to say so myself. Let me add that if you do things merely because you think some other fool expects you to do them, and he expects you to do them because he thinks you expect him to expect you to do them, it will end in everybody doing what nobody wants to do, which is in my opinion a silly state of things.

JUNO. Lunn: I love your wife; and thats all about it.

GREGORY. Juno: I love yours. What then?

JUNO. Clearly she must never see you again.

MRS. JUNO. Why not?

JUNO. Why not! My love: I'm surprised at you.

MRS. JUNO. Am I to speak only to men who dislike me?

JUNO. Yes: I think that is, properly speaking, a married woman's duty.

MRS. JUNO. Then I wont do it: thats flat. I like to be liked. I like to be loved. I want everyone round me to love me. I dont want to meet or speak to anyone who doesnt like me.

JUNO. But, my precious, this is the most horrible immorality.

MRS. LUNN. I dont intend to give up meeting you, Mr. Juno. You amuse me very much. I dont like being loved: it bores me. But I do like to be amused.

JUNO. I hope we shall meet very often. But I hope also we shall not defend our conduct.

MRS. JUNO [*rising*] This is unendurable. Weve all been flirting. Need we go on footling about it?

JUNO [*huffily*] I dont know what you call footling—

MRS. JUNO [*cutting him short*] You do. Y o u r e footling. Mr. Lunn is footling. Cant we admit that we're human and have done with it?

JUNO. I have admitted it all along. I—

MRS. JUNO. Then stop footling.

The dinner gong sounds.

MRS. LUNN [*rising*] Thank heaven! Lets go in to dinner. Gregory: take in Mrs. Juno.

GREGORY. But surely I ought to take in our guest, and not my own wife.

MRS. LUNN. Well, Mrs. Juno is not your wife, is she?

GREGORY. Oh, of course: I beg your pardon. I'm hopelessly confused. [*He offers his arm to Mrs. Juno, rather apprehensively*].

MRS. JUNO. You seem quite afraid of me [*she takes his arm*].

GREGORY. I am. I simply adore you. [*They go out together; and as they pass through the door he turns and says in a ringing voice to the other couple*] I have said to Mrs. Juno that I simply adore her. [*He takes her out defiantly*].

MRS. LUNN [*calling after him*] Yes, dear. Shes a darling. [*To Juno*] Now, Sibthorpe.

JUNO [*giving her his arm gallantly*] You have called me Sibthorpe! Thank you. I think Lunn's conduct fully justifies me in allowing you to do it.

MRS. LUNN. Yes: I think you may let yourself go now.

JUNO. Seraphita: I worship you beyond expression.

MRS. LUNN. Sibthorpe: you amuse me beyond description. Come. [*They go in to dinner together*].

The Pond *

By Henri Fabre

THE pond, the delight of my early childhood, is still a sight whereof my old eyes never tire. What animation in that verdant world! On the warm mud of the edges the Frog's little Tadpole basks and frisks in its black legions; down in the water the orange-bellied Newt steers his way slowly with the broad rudder of his flat tail; among the reeds are stationed the flotillas of the Caddis-worms, half-protruding from their tubes, which are now a tiny bit of stick and again a turret of little shells.

In the deep places the Water-beetle dives, carrying with him his reserves of breath: an air-bubble at the tip of the wing-cases and, under the chest, a film of gas that gleams like a silver breastplate; on the surface the ballet of those shimmering pearls, the Whirligigs, turns and twists; hard by skims the insubmersible troop of the Pond-skaters, who glide along with side-strokes similar to those of the cobbler sewing.

Here are the Water-boatmen, who swim on their backs with two oars spread cross-wise, and the flat Water-scorpions; here, squalidly clad in mud, is the grub of the largest of our Dragon-flies, so curious because of its manner of progression: it fills its hinder parts, a yawning funnel, with water, spirts it out again and advances just so far as the recoil of its hydraulic cannon.

The Molluscs abound, a peaceful tribe. At the bottom the plump River-snails discreetly raise their lid, opening ever so little the shutters of their dwelling; on the level of the water, in the glades of the aquatic garden, the Pond-snails—Physa, Limnæa and Planorbis—take the air.

* Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. Copyright U.S.A. 1913. All rights reserved.

Dark Leeches writhe upon their prey, a chunk of Earth-worm; thousands of tiny, reddish grubs, future Mosquitoes, go spinning around and twist and curve like so many graceful Dolphins.

Yes, a stagnant pool, though but a few feet wide, hatched by the sun, is an immense world, an inexhaustible mine of observation to the studious man and a marvel to the child who, tired of his paper-boat, diverts his eyes and thoughts a little with what is happening in the water. Let me tell what I remember of my first pond, at a time when ideas began to dawn in my seven-year-old brain.

How shall a man earn his living in my poor native village, with its inclement weather and its niggardly soil? The owner of a few acres of grazing-land rears sheep. In the best parts he scrapes the soil with the swing-plough; he flattens it into terraces supported by walls of broken stones. Pannierfuls of dung are carried up on donkey-back from the cowshed. Then, in due season, comes the excellent potato, which, boiled and served hot in a basket of plaited straw, is the chief stand-by in winter.

Should the crop exceed the needs of the household, the surplus goes to feed a pig, that precious beast, a treasure of bacon and ham. The ewes supply butter and curds; the garden boasts cabbages, turnips and even a few hives in a sheltered corner. With wealth like that one can look fate in the face.

But we, we have nothing, nothing but the little house inherited by my mother and its adjoining patch of garden. The meagre resources of the family are coming to an end. It is time to see to it; and that quickly. What is to be done? This is the stern question which father and mother sat debating one evening.

Hop-o'-my-Thumb, hiding under the wood-cutter's stool, listened to his parents overcome by want. I also, pretending to sleep, with my elbows on the table, listen not to blood-curdling designs, but to grand plans that set my heart rejoicing. This is how the matter stands: at the bottom of the village, near the church, at the spot where the water of the large roofed spring escapes from its underground weir and joins the brook in the valley, an enterprising man, back from the war,* has set up a small

* The war of 1830 with Algiers.—*Translator's Note.*

tallow-factory. He sells the scrapings of his pans, the burnt fat reeking of candle-grease, at a low price. He proclaims these wares to be excellent for fattening ducks.

"Suppose we bred some ducks," says mother. "They sell very well in town. Henri would mind them and take them down to the brook."

"Very well," says father, "let's breed some ducks. There may be difficulties in the way; but we'll have a try."

That night I had dreams of paradise: I was with my ducklings, clad in their yellow suits; I took them to the pond, I watched them have their bath, I brought them back again, carrying the more tired ones in a basket.

A month or two after, the little birds of my dreams were a reality. There were twenty-four of them. They had been hatched by two hens, of whom one, the big black one, was an inmate of the house, while the other was borrowed from a neighbour.

To bring them up the former is sufficient, so careful is she of her adopted family. At first everything goes perfectly: a tub with two fingers' depth of water serves as a pond. On sunny days the ducklings bathe in it under the anxious eye of the hen.

A fortnight later the tub is no longer enough. It contains neither cresses crammed with tiny shellfish nor Worms and Tadpoles, dainty morsels both. The time has come for dives and hunts amid the tangle of the water-weeds; and for us the day of trouble has also come. True, the miller, down by the brook, has fine ducks, easy and cheap to bring up; the tallow-smelter, who has extolled his burnt fat so loudly, has some as well, for he has the advantage of the waste water from the spring at the bottom of the village; but how are we, right up here, at the top, to procure aquatic sports for our broods? In summer we have hardly water to drink.

Near the house, in a freestone recess, a scanty source trickles into a basin made in the rock. Four or five families have, like ourselves, to draw their water there with copper pails. By the time that the schoolmaster's donkey has slaked her thirst and the neighbours have taken their provision for the day, the basin is dry. We have to wait four-and-twenty hours for it to fill. No, this is not

the hole in which the ducks would delight, nor indeed in which they would be tolerated.

There remains the brook. To go down to it with the troop of ducklings is fraught with danger. On the way, through the village, we might meet cats, bold ravishers of small poultry; some surly mongrel might frighten and scatter the little band; and it would be a hard puzzle to collect it in its entirety. We must avoid the traffic and take refuge in peaceful and sequestered spots.

On the hills, the path that climbs behind the château* soon takes a sudden turn and widens into a small plain beside the meadows. It skirts a rocky slope, whence trickles, level with the ground, a streamlet, which forms a pond of some size. Here profound solitude reigns all day long. The ducklings will be well off; and the journey can be made in peace by a deserted footpath.

You, little man, shall take them to that delectable spot. What a day it was that marked my first appearance as a herdsman of ducks! Why must there be a jar to the even tenor of such joys? The too-frequent encounter of my tender skin with the hard ground had given me a large and painful blister on the heel. Had I wanted to put on the shoes stowed away in the cupboard for Sundays and holidays, I could not. There was nothing for it but to go barefoot over the broken stones, dragging my leg and carrying high the injured heel.

Let us make a start, hobbling along, switch in hand, behind the ducks. They, too, poor little things, have sensitive soles to their feet; they limp, they quack with fatigue. They would refuse to go any further if I did not, from time to time, call a halt under the shelter of an ash.

We are there are last. The place could not be better for my birdlets: shallow, tepid water, interspersed with muddy knolls and green eyots. The diversions of the bath begin forthwith. The ducklings clap their beaks and rummage here, there and everywhere; they sift each mouthful, rejecting the clear water and retaining the good bits. In the deeper parts they point their sterns into the air and stick their heads under water. They are happy;

* The Château de Saint-Léons, standing just outside and above the village of Saint-Léons, where the author was born in 1823.—*Translator's Note.*

and it is a blessed thing to see them at work. We will let them be. It is my turn to enjoy the pond.

What is this? On the mud lie some loose, knotted, soot-coloured cords. One could take them for threads of wool like those which you pull out of an old, ravelly stocking. Can some shepherdess, knitting a black sock and finding her work turn out badly, have begun all over again and, in a movement of impatience, thrown down the wool with all the dropped stitches? It really looks like it.

I take up one of those cords in my hand. It is sticky and extremely slack; the thing slips through the fingers before they can catch hold of it. A few of the knots burst and shed their contents. What comes out is a black globule, the size of a pin's head, followed by a flat tail. I recognise, on a very small scale, a familiar object: the Tadpole, the Frog's baby. I have seen enough. Let us leave the knotted cords alone.

The next creatures please me better. They spin round on the surface of the water and their black backs gleam in the sun. If I lift a hand to seize them, that moment they disappear, I know not where. It's a pity: I should have much liked to see them closer and to make them wriggle in a little bowl which I should have put ready for them.

Let us look at the bottom of the water, pulling aside those bunches of green string whence beads of air are rising and gathering into foam. There is something of everything underneath. I see pretty shells with compact whorls, flat as beans; I notice little Worms carrying tufts and feathers; I make out some with flabby fins constantly flapping on their backs. What are they all doing there? What are their names? I do not know. And I stare at them for ever so long, held by the incomprehensible mystery of the waters.

At the place where the pond dribbles into the adjoining field are some alder-trees; and here I make a glorious find. It is a Scarab—not a very large one, oh no! He is smaller than a cherry-stone—but of an unutterable blue. The angels in paradise must wear dresses of that colour. I put the glorious one inside an empty snail-shell, which I plug up with a leaf. I shall admire the living jewel at

my leisure, when I get back. Other distractions summon me away.

The spring that feeds the pond trickles from the rock, cold and clear. The water first collects into a cup, the size of the hollow of one's two hands, and then runs over in a stream. These falls call for a mill: that goes without saying. Two bits of straw, artistically crossed upon an axis, provide the machine; some flat stones set on edge afford supports. It is a great success: the mill turns admirably. My triumph would be complete, could I but share it. For want of other playmates, I invite the ducks.

Everything palls in this poor world of ours, even a mill made of two straws. Let us think of something else: let us contrive a dam to hold back the waters and form a pool. There is no lack of stones for the brickwork. I pick the most suitable; I break the larger ones. And, while collecting these blocks, suddenly I forget all about the dam which I meant to build.

On one of the broken stones, in a cavity large enough for me to put my fist in, something gleams like glass. The hollow is lined with facets gathered in sixes, which flash and glitter in the sun. I have seen something like this in church on the great saints'-days, when the light of the candles in the big chandelier kindles the stars in its hanging crystal.

We children, lying in summer on the straw of the threshing-floor, have told one another stories of the treasures which a dragon guards underground. Those treasures now return to my mind: the names of precious stones ring out uncertainly but gloriously in my memory. I think of the king's crown, of the princesses' necklaces. In breaking stones, can I have found, but on a much richer scale, the thing that shines quite small in my mother's ring? I want more such.

The dragon of the subterranean treasures treats me generously. He gives me his diamonds in such quantities that soon I possess a heap of broken stones sparkling with magnificent clusters. He does more: he gives me his gold. The trickle of water from the rock falls on a bed of fine sand, which it swirls into bubbles. If I bend over towards the light, I see something like gold-filings whirling where the fall touches the bottom. Is it really the famous

metal of which louis, so rare with us at home, are made? One would think so, from the glitter.

I take a pinch of sand and place it in my palm. The brilliant particles are numerous, but so small that I have to pick them up with a straw moistened in my mouth. Let us drop this: they are too tiny and too bothersome to collect. The big, valuable lumps must be farther on, in the thickness of the rock. We'll come back later; we'll blast the mountain.

I break more stones. Oh, what a queer thing has just come loose, all in one piece! It is turned spiral-wise, like certain flat Snails which come out of the cracks of old walls in rainy weather. With its gnarled sides, it looks like a little ram's-horn. Shell or horn, it is very curious. How do things like that find their way into the stone?

Treasures and curiosities make my pockets bulge with pebbles. It is late; and the little ducklings have had all they want to eat. Come along, youngsters, let's go home. My blistered heel is forgotten in my excitement.

The walk back is a delight. A voice sings in my ear, an untranslatable voice, softer than any language and bewildering as a dream. It speaks to me for the first time of the mysteries of the pond; it glorifies the heavenly insect which I hear moving in the empty snail-shell, its temporary cage; it whispers the secrets of the rock, the gold-filings, the faceted jewels, the ram's-horn turned to stone.

Poor simpleton, smother your joy! I arrive. They catch sight of my bulging pockets, with their disgraceful load of stones. The cloth has given way under the rough and heavy burden.

"You rascal!" says father, at sight of the damage. "I send you to mind the ducks and you amuse yourself picking up stones, as though there weren't enough of them all round the house. Make haste and throw them away!"

Broken-hearted, I obey. Diamonds, gold-dust, petrified ram's-horn, heavenly beetle, are all flung on a rubbish-heap outside the door.

Mother bewails her lot:

"A nice thing, bringing up children to see them turn out so badly! You'll bring me to my grave. Green stuff I don't mind: it does for the rabbits. But stones, which

ruin your pockets; poisonous animals, which'll sting your hand: what good are they to you, silly? There's no doubt about it: some one has thrown a spell over you!"

Yes, my poor mother, you were right, in your simplicity: a spell had been cast upon me; I admit it to-day. When it is hard enough to earn one's bit of bread, does not improving one's mind but render one more meet for suffering? Of what avail is the torment of learning to the derelicts of life? A deal better off am I, at this late hour, dogged by poverty and knowing that the diamonds of the duck-pool were rock-crystal, the gold-dust mica, the stone horn an Ammonite and the sky-blue beetle a Hoplia! We poor men would do better to mistrust the joys of knowledge: let us dig our furrow in the fields of the commonplace, flee the temptations of the pond, mind our ducks and leave to others, more favoured by fortune, the job of explaining the world's mechanism, if the spirit moves them.

And yet, no! Alone, among living creatures, man has the thirst for knowledge; he alone pries into the mysteries of things. The least among us will utter his whys and his wherefores, a fine pain unknown to the brute beast. If these questionings come from us with greater persistence, with a more imperious authority, if they divert us from the quest of lucre, life's only object in the eyes of the majority, does it become us to complain? Let us be careful not to do so, for that would be denying the best of all our gifts.

Let us strive, on the contrary, within the measure of our capacity, to force a gleam of light from the vast unknown; let us examine and question, and here and there wrest a few shreds of truth. We shall sink under the task; in the present ill-ordered state of society we shall end, perhaps, in the workhouse. Let us go ahead for all that: our consolation shall be that we have increased by one atom the general mass of knowledge, the incomparable treasure of mankind

As this modest lot has fallen to me, I will return to the pond, notwithstanding the wise admonitions and the bitter tears which I once owed to it. I will return to the pond, but not to that of the small ducks, the pond a-flower with illusions: those ponds do not occur twice in a lifetime. For luck like that, you must be in all the new glory of your first breeches and your first ideas.

Many another have I come upon since that distant time, ponds very much richer, and, moreover, explored with the maturer eye of experience. Enthusiastically I searched them with the net, stirred up their mud, ransacked their trailing weeds. None in my memories comes up to the first, magnified in its delights and mortifications by the marvellous perspective of the years.

Nor would any of them suit my plans of to-day. Their world is too vast. I should lose myself in their immensities, where life swarms freely in the sun. Like the ocean, they are infinite in their fruitfulness. And then any assiduous watching, undisturbed by passers-by, is an impossibility on the public way. What I want is a pond on an extremely reduced scale, sparingly stocked in my own fashion, an artificial pond standing permanently on my study-table.

A twenty-franc piece has been overlooked in a corner of the drawer. I can spend it without seriously jeopardising the domestic balance. Let us make this gift to Science, who, I fear, will be none too much obliged to me. A gorgeous equipment may be all very well for laboratories wherein the cells and fibres of the dead are consulted at great expense; but such magnificence is of doubtful utility when we have to study the actions of the living. It is the humble makeshift, of no value, that stumbles on the secrets of life. What did the best results of my studies of instinct cost me? Nothing but time and, above all, patience. My extravagant expenditure of twenty francs, therefore, will be a risky speculation if devoted to the purchase of an apparatus of study. It will bring me in nothing in the way of fresh views, of that I am convinced. However, let us try.

The blacksmith makes me the framework of a cage out of a few iron rods. The joiner, who is also a glazier on occasion—for in my village you have to be a Jack-of-all-trades if you would make both ends meet—sets the framework on a wooden base and supplies it with a movable board as a lid; he fixes thick panes of glass in the four sides. Behold the apparatus, complete, with a bottom of tarred sheet-iron and a trap to let the water out.

The makers express themselves satisfied with their work, a singular novelty in their respective shops, where

many an inquisitive caller has wondered what use I intend to make of my little glass trough. The thing creates a certain stir. Some insist that it is meant to hold my supplies of oil and to take the place of the receptacle in general use in our parts, the urn dug out of a block of stone. What would those utilitarians have thought of my crazy mind had they known that my costly gear would merely serve to let me watch some wretched animals kicking about in the water!

Smith and glazier are content with their work. I myself am pleased. For all its rustic air, the apparatus does not lack elegance. It looks very well, standing on a little table in front of a window visited by the sun for the greater part of the day. Its holding capacity is some ten or eleven gallons. What shall we call it? An aquarium? No, that would be too pretentious and would, very unjustly, suggest the aquatic toy filled with rockwork, waterfalls and gold-fish beloved of the dwellers in Suburbia. Let us preserve the gravity of serious things and not treat my learned trough as though it were a drawing-room futility. We will call it the glass pond.

I furnish it with a heap of those limey incrustations wherewith certain springs in the neighbourhood cover the dead clumps of rushes. It is light, full of holes and gives a faint suggestion of a coral-reef. Moreover, it is covered with a short, green, velvety moss, a downy sward of infinitesimal pond-weed. I count on this modest vegetation to keep the water in a reasonably wholesome state, without driving me to frequent renewals which would disturb the work of my colonies. Sanitation and quiet are the first conditions of success. Now the stocked pond will not be long in filling itself with gases unfit to breathe, with putrid effluvia and other animal refuse; it will become a sink in which life will have killed life. Those dregs must disappear as soon as they are formed, must be burnt and purified; and from their oxidised ruins there must even rise a perfect life-giving gas, so that the water may retain an unchangeable store of the breathable element. The plant effects this purification in its sewage-farm of green cells.

When the sun beats upon the glass pond, the work of the water-weeds is a sight to behold. The green-

carpeted reef is lit up with an infinity of scintillating points and assumes the appearance of a fairy-lawn of velvet studded with thousands of diamond pins'-heads. From this exquisite jewellery pearls break loose continuously and are at once replaced by others in the generating casket; slowly they rise, like tiny globes of light. They spread on every side. It is a constant display of fireworks in the depths of the water.

Chemistry tells us that, thanks to their green matter and the stimulus of the sun's rays, the weeds decompose the carbonic acid gas wherewith the water is impregnated by the breathing of its inhabitants and the corruption of the organic refuse; it retains the carbon, which is wrought into fresh tissues; it exhales the oxygen in tiny bubbles. These partly dissolve in the water and partly reach the surface, where their froth supplies the atmosphere with an excess of breathable gas. The dissolved portion keeps the colonists of the pond alive and causes the unhealthy products to be oxidised and disappear.

Old hand though I be, I take an interest in this trite marvel of a bundle of weeds perpetuating hygienic principles in a stagnant pool; I look with a delighted eye upon the inexhaustible spray of spreading bubbles; I see in imagination the prehistoric times when seaweed, the first-born of plants, produced the first atmosphere for living things to breathe at the time when the silt of the continents was beginning to emerge. What I see before my eyes, between the glass panes of my trough, tells me the story of the planet surrounding itself with pure air.

Boccaccio

By Walter Raleigh

We know hardly anything of the intimate life of Boccaccio except what he has told us, and almost all that he has told us is presented to us under the guise of fiction. Was he speaking of himself? Here enter the two eternal schools of literary criticism with their tedious controversy. The early romances and poems of Boccaccio—the *Filocolo*, the *Filostrato*, the *Teseide*, the *Ameto*, the *Amorosa Visione*, the *Fiammetta*, the *Ninfale Fiesolano*—are all romances, poems, and allegories dealing with love; all point to a love-affair which reaches the summit of happiness and is then broken by desertion and separation. There was only one love-story, it seems, which interested Boccaccio; what wonder if it was his own? And his own, so far as we have independent knowledge of it, corresponds with the love-story of the romances and poems. The *Filostrato*, in its dedication to *Fiammetta*, asserts the identity:

"You are gone suddenly to Samnium, and . . . I have sought in the old histories what personage I might choose as messenger of my secret and unhappy love, and have found Troilus, son of Priam, who loved Cressida. His miseries are my history. I have sung them in light rhymes and in my own Tuscan, and so when you read the lamentations of Troilus and his sorrow at the departure of his love, you shall know my tears, my sighs, my agonies; and if I vaunt the beauties and the charms of Cressida, you will know that I dream of yours."

Yet in these same works Boccaccio was inventing the various literary art-forms which he bequeathed to Europe. The *Filocolo* is a prose romance after the French fashion. The *Filostrato* and the *Teseide* are epics of love (*Troilus and Cressida* and *The Knight's Tale*) written in the *ottava rima*; the *Ameto* is a pastoral in prose and verse; the

Amorosa Visione is a poem in *terza rima*; the *Fiammetta* is a psychological novel. In all that he does, Boccaccio shows the way to modern literature.

In his later life he was infected by the habits of the learned, and produced heavy compilations in Latin, encouraged thereto by his friend Petrarch. The *De Claris Mulieribus*, the *De Casibus Illustrium Virorum*, the *De Genealogiis Deorum*, the *De Montibus, Silvis, Lacubus, Fluminibus*, &c., were dictionaries of themes, mythological and geographical encyclopædias. They remind us how great a part of the business of the Renaissance was concerned with knowledge rather than art. Their influence has been enormous. The Legends of Good Women, the Falls of Princes, the Mirrors for Magistrates, the whole mythological apparatus of poetry—all have Boccaccio for a chief source. Indeed, his dull Latin works were in some ways more influential than his perfect Italian poems. They supplied poets with raw material.

Between these two groups of works there falls a greater thing than either: the hundred tales called the *Decameron*. If all the rest were lost and forgotten, we should lose many beautiful things, but the reputation of Boccaccio would be no lower than it is. I shall speak only of the *Decameron* and of its author. I believe that English readers sometimes find it difficult to understand how it is that the *Decameron* has placed its author in the highest seat along with the few great creators of modern literature. It is well to confront this difficulty at once, so that we may not take our own prejudices, and limitations, and modern conventions of sentiment as a measure of a wider world. Our taste must always be, more or less, the victim of our limitations, but we should beware of glorying in it, and, above all, we should beware of mistaking the aversions of timidity and sensibility for critical judgments.

Why has this writer of vain, light tales become an immortal? His success is not a success of scandal. Other writers have been as gay as he was, and less decent; yet they have gone down to the pit. What is his secret?

I must speak at large of the *Decameron*, but here, and at first, I will try to answer this question. The secret of Boccaccio is no hidden talisman; it is the secret of air and light. A brilliant sunshine inundates and glorifies his

tales. The scene in which they are laid is as wide and well-ventilated as the world. The spirit which inspires them is an absolute humanity, unashamed and unafraid. He is willing to pass his time and cast in his lot with the brotherhood of men, whether they be in rags or fine linen. He is no lone thinker, living in those dark and fantastic recesses of the soul where ideas are generated. As soon as you open his book you are out of doors, subject to all the surprising chances of the world, blown upon by the wind and rain, carried hither and thither in our crowded life, to drinking parties and secret assignations and funerals. Shocked you may be, and incommoded by the diversity of your experience, but you are never melancholy and never outcast. The world, which is the touchstone of sanity, is always with you. Indeed, Boccaccio might be called the escape from Dante. The dreamer awakes, and tastes the air, and sees the colours of life, and feels the delight of moving his limbs. He is among men and women. He has touched ground after his dizzy flight of the spirit; he has come out of the prison-house of theological system, nobly and grimly architected, and is abroad again in the homely disorder of our familiar world. Small blame to him if he laughs.

The divine power, the highest wisdom, and the primal love made Hell, says Dante, very profoundly. But the world, which was also made by God, is a lighter thing, with less of the symmetry of an institution. It is like one of those suddenly conceived works (and this view has the warrant of orthodoxy) which are thrown off by the artist in happy moments of careless inspiration. Those who enter Hell, says Dante, must abandon hope. But the world is made of hope; and the *Decameron* is a portrait of the world.

There is more than this sense of relief from system in the *Decameron*. The world is wide; and its width supplies a kind of profundity in another dimension. In a confined place life can raise itself and be high; in a low-lying plain it can extend itself and be broad. The *Decameron* is so generous in its breadth, and so various, that no criticism from without is needed: it criticises itself. Experience cannot be criticised by our idea of what experience ought to be like; it can be criticised only by more

experience. This is what is called the irony of life, which, in its literary reflection, is found in all the best drama. Life criticises itself. If any one of us desires to have a criticism of his own way of life, he will not find anything of worth in the ideas of a secluded student, who often enough is willing to tell his opinion of what such a life ought to be. When the secluded student is a passionate and eloquent creature, like Ruskin, his ideas often produce a great effect, and a whole generation of the weaker sort endeavours to conform itself, not to circumstances or the pressure of experience, but to the sentiments of a revered teacher. But this is only an echo, a prolongation of the murmur of applause that greeted the voice, and it soon dies. The life of, say, a professor or a resident fellow of a college is to be effectively criticised not by the ideas of another professor or another fellow of a college, but by the mere juxtaposition of other dissimilar lives—the life, say, of a soldier or a brewer's drayman. Boccaccio describes so many kinds of lives that each of them is seen in relation to all humanity; and this is the truest criticism; it gives the right perspective. He knows that the event of human actions is manifold and incomprehensible; he is very humble and very humane; so he accepts things as they are, and shows how dire effects spring from trivial causes, how a gay beginning may have a disgraceful and lamentable ending, and how a disgraceful beginning may be turned by the whim of Fate to laughter and ease. This is what is called the mixture of tragic and comic effects.

The best of Boccaccio's stories are so entirely like life that the strongest of the emotions awakened in the reader is not sympathy or antipathy, not moral approval or moral indignation, but a more primitive passion than these—the passion of curiosity. We want to see what happens. This is the passion of all watchers of life who are not pedantic or foolish. They know only that they are sure to be surprised. Life is an infinitely subtle game, delightful to watch, giving glimpses here and there of the underlying causes of things, luring on the gamesters who believe they have discovered a winning system, fortifying them in their folly by granting them a short run of luck, and then, by a turn of the wheel, overthrowing and mocking their calcula-

tions. The interest of the game and the joy of its uncertainty give millions of readers to the daily newspapers. Indeed, to suppress the gambling news, you would have to suppress the news. The same interest gave a large public also to Boccaccio and the novelists, his followers. Here is set down a lively record of the miseries and happiness that have fallen to the lot of those who lived before us. In the world we see only scraps and fragments of the lives of others; in the book we may see the whole extent of the good and bad fortune that falls to man in this life. Often there is a moral, clear enough; flightiness and folly are seen to work their own punishment. But not always; and the moral is a very small part of the story; Boccaccio cares very little about it; he knows only that pleasure and sorrow chase each other across the sky, that no one can be sure to escape from suffering some of the bitterest and most awful of life's chances except by escaping from life itself; and life is what he loves.

I must sketch his own life briefly; and, in order to be brief, I must avoid all those controversies with which the narrative has been honeycombed. One misfortune which attends the growth of universities is that learned debates and investigations on the incidents of the life of a great man are carried on by trained bores, whom no one would dream of trusting to give judgment on any incident in the life of anyone who is still alive. Yet they publish papers, and their papers are quoted by others, so that the outlines of the record are in a fair way to be snowed under by masses of learned deposit. I shall state only the conclusions and inferences which I accept. They have not been disproved, and they correspond in the main with what I may call the traditional life of Boccaccio.

Giovanni Boccaccio (long ago naturalised in England by the name of John Boccace) was born in Paris in 1313. His father was a Florentine of humble birth, who achieved importance as a banker and moneylender. His mother's name was Jeanne, and she was a Frenchwoman. She was deserted by the elder Boccaccio, who returned to Florence and took another to wife. Boccaccio was sent to Florence in infancy or childhood, and passed his early time with his father and stepmother. He was not preoccupied with books or studies in these years. Indeed, the impulse to

literature came to him at Naples from the life of the city and of the Court of King Robert. He was intended by his father for business, but he showed no aptitude for it, and (his home being perhaps an unhappy place for a step-child) he was sent to business in Naples, and later on was put to learn the Canon Law as a means of livelihood. "Naples," he says, "was gay, peaceful, rich, and splendid above any other Italian city, full of festas, games, and shows." In this city, for six years of his youth, he "did nothing but waste irrecoverable time." By wasting time he means attending intermittently to business and to the study of the Canon Law. He began to know what he wanted, and to think only of poetry as a profession.

It was probably in 1336, on the Vigil of Easter, in the Church of S. Lorenzo of the Franciscans, that he first saw Fiammetta, the lady "who was ordained to rule my mind, and who was promised me in my dreams." Her name was Maria D'Aquino, and she was the natural daughter of King Robert of Naples. She had been married at fifteen, and was famous for her beauty; in short, she was what would have been called in Queen Anne's time "a reigning toast." The scene in the church has been very exactly described by Boccaccio, and very exactly rendered or adapted by Chaucer in *Troilus and Cressida*. But Chaucer's Cressida is more modest and domestic than her original. Fiammetta had that shining, glittering beauty, those flashing eyes and bright red lips, delicately moulded like Cupid's bow, which, if the world is right, often indicate a cruel and sensual temper. The rest of Boccaccio's love-story is made up of a period of wooing, a short intoxication of complete happiness, and then betrayal and despair. In 1338 Fiammetta left Naples for Baia, and forbade him to follow her. By her excuses and her shifts to put him off, he gradually divined the truth. He was in a transport of rage and tenderness, jealousy and grief. At the same time he learned that his father was ruined, and he returned in 1340 to Florence and poverty.

The map of a lover's mind which Boccaccio has given us in the *Filostrato* is one of the truest and closest studies in all literature. Here is one passage, translated almost literally by Chaucer:

Fro thennisforth he rideth up and doun,
And everything com him to remembraunce
As he rod for-by places of the toun
In which he whilom had al his plesaunce,
"Lo, yonder saw I last my lady daunce!
And in that templè with her eyen clere
Me caughte first my righte lady dere!"

This is an extract from the love-story, not of Chaucer, but of Boccaccio. And the later history of Boccaccio is contained in the lines that follow:

Than thoughte he thus: "O blisful Lord Cupide,
Whan I the proces have in my memorie,
How thou me hast werrey'd on every side,
Men mighte a book make of it, lik a storie."

Boccaccio made many books of it, and within a few years a name for himself.

The rest of his life was taken up with his unceasing labours in literature, varied by ambassadorial work for the Republic of Florence. In 1348 the great plague, or Black Death, desolated Italy. Fiammetta died of it in Naples; at the same time Boccaccio's father died in Florence, and he was alone in the world. The description of the plague which he has prefixed to the *Decameron* is perhaps the most vivid historical document of that century. We can see the streets of Florence as they were, the disorderly burials, and the mad pleasures, for, as Bacon remarks in his essay *Of Love*, "perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures." There is something more than artistic cunning in that choice of a marvellous black background for the sunshine mirth and ease of the tales in the garden. It is consummate art; how pathetic and frail and brilliant the life of this world is seen to be when it is silhouetted against the bulk of death! But in Boccaccio's own life-history the plague was like a dark band across the very middle of its course. Everything was changed. He survived, a comparatively old man for his thirty-six years, deeply seen in suffering, disillusioned but not embittered, somewhat aloof from life, a quick observer, a lover of fair and noble things, above all a lover of that comedy which may be seen almost everywhere in human life by the eye of a dispassionate spectator, that comedy which is the best febrifuge, or specific against mania. He completed the *Decameron* in the space of some five years, by the time he was forty; from that

time onwards his life ran another course. He first met Petrarch in Florence when Petrarch was on his way to Rome in connection with the public thanksgiving for the lifting of the plague, and his friendship with Petrarch fills the last twenty-five years of his life to his death in 1375. It was a happy and honourable friendship, a great resource to both men, and a means of developing what was most amiable in both their characters. But literature owes nothing to it on Boccaccio's account. I have praised the *Decameron*; I ought perhaps to quote what Petrarch thought of it. Writing to Boccaccio in 1374, about a month before he died, Petrarch says: "The book you have composed in our maternal tongue, probably during your youth, has fallen into my hands, I do not know by what chance. I have seen it, but if I should say I had read it, I should lie. The work is very long, and it is written for the vulgar —that is to say, in prose. Besides, I have been overwhelmed with occupations." Boccaccio was younger than Petrarch by nine years, and was a poor scholar in comparison; he was content to regard his own talent as an inferior vernacular thing, not to be mentioned in the same day as the niceties and severities of classical scholarship; so he put himself to school to Petrarch, who did not refuse the office of tutor. The greatest novelist of the modern world was taken in hand by a scholar, and in conformity with academic usage was made to pursue researches into the genealogy of the ancient gods. Boccaccio was quite simple and modest in regard to himself; he knew that some of his stories had been censured by grave and learned persons; he was advised to undertake work of a more exalted kind (namely, the investigation of the genealogy of the ancient gods), he cheerfully submitted to the discipline of his superiors, and breathed no word of protest. During these years the man of letters was dead, but the penman, who yet lived, an industrious ghost, went on writing his weary posthumous works. Ghosts are notorious for the dulness of their literary output, and this, the ghost of Boccaccio, was no exception to the rule. Here and there, but not often, nor for long, there is a gleam of the old splendour, a flush of the old warmth and geniality. It has been said that the periods of Italian literature during which the influence of Petrarch was strongest are the

weakest periods of Italian literature. The life-history of Boccaccio throws some light on this statement.

One other event must be mentioned. In 1373 the city of Florence founded a Dante Chair, and appointed Boccaccio as the first holder. He produced a *Life of Dante*, and a Commentary on part of the *Inferno*. So Boccaccio was the first Professor of Modern Literature, and incomparably the most distinguished writer who ever took up with that uneasy trade.

The sources of Boccaccio's stories have been carefully investigated and catalogued. But this investigation does not belong to the study of Boccaccio, for he did not know the sources of his stories. He picked them up where he found them—the greater part, perhaps, in conversation. A man who buys wares and trinkets from a travelling pedlar does not generally concern himself much with the trade routes of Europe. But it is possible to make a rough classification of the stories—or of the plots, for the manner of telling them is Boccaccio's own. About a third of them are found among the *fabliaux* of the lower kind of minstrels in Northern France. Another group contains moral apologues, Oriental in origin and essence, but scattered through many countries. Last, and most important, there are the stories founded on real incidents of Italian life, some of them belonging to his own time. These are what I may call the newspaper stories; they have this enormous advantage over the others, that they were not invented to illustrate a moral lesson or to indulge a lewd fantasy; they are merely true. The *Hundred Merry Tales*, the *Seven Wise Masters*: these are famous examples of two kinds of popular anecdotes—the anecdotes of the tavern and of the pulpit. The one kind is commonly as extravagant as the other. Both are enormously popular, for they write their lessons large. The coarse jest is quite clear and intelligible; the moral parable is seldom elusive or subtle. But the truth of life is a much more delicate affair; it cannot be advertised on hoardings or sandwich-boards. By far the most precious of Boccaccio's bequests are those stories which tell us what actually happened during his own time, or not long before, in Italy and the Mediterranean. These set the standard; and the strange thing is that he is not satisfied with the wooden framework of the other stories,

he tries to make them lifelike too, so that the most elaborate art of modern portraiture is applied to traditional indecencies and traditional moralities. Punch and Judy come to life. Let me take one instance—the first story in the *Decameron*, it will serve as well as another. The first story of the first day gives a notable example of hypocrisy; the last story of the last day, the famous story of Griselda, celebrates the virtue of patience. Both are raised to a height almost heroic, and yet both are almost brought to the likeness of humanity.

The hypocrite of the first story was a certain notary or small lawyer of Paris, called Master Chappelet du Prat. He held it in high disdain that any of his contracts should be found without falsehood. He bore false witness, when he was thereto entreated, as if it were the only pleasure in the world; and often when he was not entreated at all. He made no care or conscience to be perjured, and thereby won many law-suits. He delighted to cause enmities and scandals between kindred and friends. If he were called upon to kill anyone, he would go to it very willingly. He was a horrible blasphemer of God and His Saints. He basely contemned the Church and counted religion a vile and unprofitable thing, but he would very joyfully visit taverns and places of dishonest repute. He would steal both in public and private, as if it were a gift of nature. He was a great glutton and drunkard, also a confirmed gamester; and carried false dice, to cheat with them the very best friends he had.

"Why do I waste time," says the narrator, "in adding many words? To be brief: there never was a worse man born."

This lawyer was employed by a certain rich merchant in France, who, having to recover debts from the Burgundians, themselves versed in every deceit, chose Chappelet as a fit instrument. In the course of his collector's labours, Chappelet lodged in Dijon with two Florentine brothers, moneylenders, and there fell ill, so that the doctors despaired of his life.

And now Boccaccio begins to get to work. He lets you feel the anxiety of the two brothers and overhear their whispered conversations. What are they to do? We lodged him, they say, when he was well; to turn him out

now that he is mortally sick will do us no credit. On the other hand, he has notoriously been a bad man; he probably will not make any confession nor take the sacrament; no Church will receive his body; he will have to be buried like a dog. Even if he were to confess, no priest would dare to absolve him from his many and monstrous sins. So he will die, and must be cast into some ditch, and the people of the town, who already do not like us, will mutiny against us, and say, "Why should we suffer these Lombard dogs, whom the Church rejects, to live among us?" Perhaps the people will attack our house, and rob our goods, and our lives will be in danger. What are we to do?

Now Master Chappelet lay in a neighbouring room, and had quick ears. He called the brothers to him and promised them that they should suffer no inconvenience on his account. "Only send me," he said, "the most holy and religious man that you can find, and I will take care of the rest." So they sent to him an aged, devout Friar, a master of the Holy Scriptures, a very venerable person, of a sanctified life. The Friar spoke words of comfort to him and asked how often he had been at confession. Master Chappelet (who had never been at confession in his life) replied, "Holy Father, I commonly go to confession once a week, sometimes much oftener, but it is true that eight days have now passed since I was confessed, so violent has been the extremity of my weakness." "My son," said the good old man, "you have done well; and since you have so often confessed yourself, I shall have the less labour in asking you questions."

"O good Father," said Chappelet, "do not talk like that; although I have been often confessed, I desire now to make a general confession of all the sins that come to my remembrance, from the very day of my birth to this present hour. I entreat you, holy Father, to question me closely, as if I had never been confessed before. And take no account of my sickness, for I had rather offend against my carnal welfare than hazard the perdition of my soul."

So the Friar questions him, and Master Chappelet makes his marvellous confession. I take some extracts, using, for the most part, the spirited English version of 1620.

He confesses that he has been guilty of the sin of gluttony, for he has drunk water with too great relish, and has eaten salad with more pleasure than agrees with the nature of fasting. The Friar says that these sins are natural, and very light. "O sir," says Master Chappelet, "never tell me this to comfort me, for well you know, and I am not ignorant, that such things as are done for the service of God ought all to be performed purely, and without any blemish of the mind."

This is a promising beginning, and Master Chappelet soon improves upon it. Asked whether he has often been angry, "O sir," says he, "therein I assure you I have often sinned. Alas! what man is able to forbear it, beholding the daily actions of men to be so dishonest? Many times in a day I have rather wished myself dead than living, beholding youth pursuing idle vanities, to swear and forswear themselves, tippling in taverns, and never haunting churches, but rather affecting the world's follies than any such duties as they owe to God." "This is a good and holy anger," said the Friar; "but, tell me, hath not rage or fury at any time so overruled thee as to commit murder or manslaughter, or to speak evil of any man, or to do any other such kind of injury?" "O Father," answered Master Chappelet, "you that seem to be a man of God, how dare you use such vile words? If I had had the least thought to do any such act, do you think God would have suffered me to live? Those are deeds of darkness, fit for villains and wicked livers; when at any time I have met with one of them, I have said, 'Go, God amend thee.'"

And so he carries on, confessing kind and good actions under the guise of sins. He has spoken ill of another, for when he saw a man continually beat his wife he complained to the man's parents. He has cheated in merchandise, for once a man brought him money in a purse, and it was found later that there was fourpence too much, so Master Chappelet gave it to the poor. And once, when he was a very little boy, he cursed his mother, which now gives him occasion for an anguish of filial devotion. So, in the end, the holy man absolves him, and adds his own benediction, and believes him to be one of the saints of the earth. "And who would not have done the like," says the story, "hearing

a man to speak in this manner when he was at the very point of death?"

So Master Chappelet is buried in the convent and sermons are preached upon him, and he is canonised, and the crowd press about his bier for relics, and a chapel is built for his tomb, and "for many days it was strange to see how the country people came thither in heaps, with holy candles and other offerings, and images of wax fastened to the tomb, in sign of sacred and solemn vows to this new-created Saint."

I have quoted at some length, to illustrate the zest of Boccaccio and his generosity of treatment, if I may so call it. Here is a hypocrite in the grand style! It is all done for a single end, to save himself and his hosts from danger and discomfort. But the real motive is the delight of the craftsman—hypocrisy for art's sake.

Think of the slightness of the story. A wicked lawyer makes a lying confession on his death-bed and dies in the odour of sanctity. That is all. How many writers, presented with that summary, would make a living thing of it, full of humour and irony and delight? It is not even one of the best told of Boccaccio's stories; yet the vitality of his genius is in every part of it.

When he comes to narrate histories that are full of incident, what a pageant of human adventure unrolls itself before our eyes! What dazzling and terrifying possibilities seem to lie in wait for us at every corner! And what a picture of Europe, and of its wayfaring life, at a time so unlike our own, a time when man had his face set towards liberty! The short summaries of the stories are full of life. Here is one of them:—

"Three young men are in love with three sisters, and elope with them into Crete. There the eldest sister, urged by jealousy, kills her lover. The second sister saves her from the penalty of death by yielding to the suit of the Duke of Crete, but is herself thereupon killed by her own lover, who flies away in company with the elder sister. The third couple, being left behind, are charged with the murder, and being unable to face the prospect of torture, confess themselves guilty, but bribe the keepers of the prison with money and escape into Rhodes, where they die in great poverty."

It is like the record of a police case, yet it is all made significant and vivid by Boccaccio. The eldest brother sets the whole train of violence in motion by his fickleness; the others are involved by the passions of anger and love, so that, however extravagant the summary may sound, the events, as Boccaccio narrates them, seem to follow one another naturally and inevitably, linked in the chain of Fate.

The dangers of passion, the dangers of folly and vanity, these certainly are morals to be found everywhere in the *Decameron.* Boccaccio has a singularly light and happy touch in his treatment of foolish persons. He has no acquaintance with the kind of foolishness that confounds the wisdom of this world; he is never metaphysical in his treatment. Shakespeare's fools are, many of them, also God's fools; they live in the deeper issues of things. But Boccaccio's fools and dunces are ordinary human creatures in whom the human faculty of prudence and discernment is quaintly and delightfully lacking. They are a numerous and amiable family. There is the poor simple-minded painter Calandrino, a troubled soul, who was sadly duped time and again by his fellows, Bruno and Buffalmaco, men of very recreative spirits. There is the foolish young gentlewoman of Venice, empty-headed and vain of her beauty, who was induced to believe that the god Cupid himself had fallen in love with her. There is the medical man, Doctor Simon, who took a house in Florence and watched the passers-by, in the hope that he might get them for patients. Unfortunately he chanced to fasten his attention on Bruno and Buffalmaco, and he noticed that they lived merrily and with less care than anyone else in the city. When he heard that they were poor men, and painters by profession, he wondered (knowing nothing of the artistic temperament) how it was possible for them to live so jocundly and in such poverty. So he asked them what hidden means of livelihood they had.. They, perceiving him to be a loggerhead, plied him with tales of a secret club, founded by a necromancer, frequented by Kings and Empresses, and endowed with all the luxuries of the world. Then the Doctor had them daily for guests, and employed them to paint his dining-room and his street-door and all the parts of his house with suitable frescoes.

And he besought them to admit him to their club—the Pirates' Club, as they were pleased to call it. All the time that Bruno was painting the Battle of the Rats and Cats in the gallery of the Doctor's garden, the Doctor would stand by and hold the candle for him, for he painted after dusk, and tease him to be allowed to join the club. "Hold the candle a little nearer," said Bruno, "till I have finished the tails of these rats, then I will answer you." The poor Doctor ransacked his head for everything that might tell in his favour. "I would do anything for you," he said; "you might take me into your club. You can perfectly well see what a handsome man I am, and how well my legs are proportioned to my body, and I have a face like a rose, and, more than that, I am a Doctor of Medicine, and I think you have none of that profession in your club, and I have a great store of anecdote, and can sing a good song, and if you don't believe it, I will sing you one." With that he began to sing. In the sequel Master Doctor was very shamefully treated by the high-spirited painters. Folly never triumphs in Boccaccio, and the practical jokes that are put upon it often transgress the limits of delicate taste.

If Boccaccio is the first of the moderns, the world that he paints is more than half mediæval. The nobility and beauty of that older world of chivalry shine out in the loftier tales. I must tell only one of them, and in my own translation, for the translations that I have seen do not render the courtesies of the original. Most of the effect is in the deliberate, loving detail; and no translation can present more than a shadow. Here is the ninth story of the fifth day, told by Fiammetta, who was elected Queen for that day's session:—

There once lived in Florence a young gentleman named Federigo degli Alberighi, who was reputed for courtesy and feats of arms above all the other gallants in Tuscany. He fell in love with a lady called Monna Giovanna, the fairest and most gracious lady in Florence, and to win her favour he launched out into lavish expenses of every kind, feasts and banquets, tilts and tournaments. But she, being as virtuous as she was fair, made no account whatever of these things, nor of the giver of them. So Federigo wasted all his substance, and in the end had to retire to a single

poor little farm, where he lived with no companion but his favourite hawk or falcon, one of the best in the world; and there living on what his falcon caught for him, he passed his time in poverty and obscurity.

Meantime Monna Giovanna's husband died, leaving all his property to their son, and if the son should die without issue, to Monna Giovanna herself. Being left a widow, she lived during the summer season at a country house which happened to be near Federigo's farm.

The young man, her son, who was fond of coursing and hawking, struck up a friendship with Federigo, and took especial delight in the wonderful flights of the falcon. He greatly coveted to have the falcon for his own, but seeing how dearly Federigo loved her, he forbore to make the request. After a time the youth, who was an only child, fell ill, and, in spite of his mother's care, wasted away. She cherished him night and day, and urged him to ask her for anything that he had a fancy for, promising that she would get it for him if by any means she could. So at last he said, "If I could only have Federigo's falcon for my own, I believe I should recover."

The lady stood still for a long time on hearing this, and thought of many things. What could she do? She remembered how Federigo loved the falcon, never letting it go far from him. She remembered how constant he had been in his affection to herself, and how she had never shown him the least token of kindness. "How dare I send, or go," she thought, "and ask him for the falcon, the best that ever flew? How can I be so churlish as to try to take away from this gentleman his one remaining delight?" She knew that she had only to ask for the falcon to have it, and her mind was full of troubled thoughts. At last love for her son prevailed, and she determined, whatever might come of it, not to send, but to go herself and make the request. So she promised her son that she would bring it to him, and at once he began to amend.

The first thing in the morning she took a waiting gentlewoman with her and walked to Federigo's farm. He was in a little garden behind the house, attending to the work of the place, but when he heard that Monna Giovanna was there, he ran to welcome her. She greeted him gently,

and said, "I have come, Federigo, to recompense a part of the loss you had by me, when you offered me more love than it befitted you to give or me to take. And the recompense is this: I and this lady are willing to be your guests, and to dine with you this morning." Federigo made reverence and said, "Madonna, I do not remember ever to have had any loss by you, but rather so much gain that if I am worth anything at all it is by virtue of your worthiness and of the love that I bore to you. Your generous visit is more to me than it would be if I had all my riches to spend again, for now you have come to a poor house." So he received her with diffidence, and took her into his little garden, and said, "Madonna, since I have no other retinue, this good woman here, the wife of an honest labourer, will attend on you while I make ready the dinner." Though his poverty was extreme, he had never felt it till now, for in the house he found nothing to entertain the lady herself for whose sake he had in times past feasted thousands; he was beside himself with distress, and ran hither and thither, cursing his ill-fortune, but found no money, and nothing of value that he could sell for money. He could not bring himself to borrow from the labouring people who served him, much less to beg of anyone else, when suddenly his eyes fell upon his falcon, sitting on its perch in the little room in which he lived. This was his only resource; he took hold of it, and, finding it plump, thought that it would make a dish worthy of his lady. Without more ado he wrung the falcon's neck, and gave it to a little maid to pluck it, and truss it, and put it on the spit, while he laid the table with the few white napkins which were left to him. Then with a more cheerful countenance he went to the lady in the garden and told her that dinner, the best that he could provide, was served. So they sat down, and Federigo waited on them, and, without suspecting what they were eating, they ate the falcon. When they had risen from the table and had talked pleasantly on indifferent topics for a while, it seemed to the lady that the time was come to tell her errand; so, looking kindly at Federigo, she said, "Federigo, I daresay when I tell you what brought me here you will be amazed at my presumption, and will think of the past, and of my honourable rejection of you, which perhaps seemed to you nothing but

cruelty and hardness of heart; but if you had ever had children, you would forgive me, at least in part, for you would know how strong is the love that binds us to them. Though you have none, I have an only child. I must obey the law that is laid on mothers; I am forced, against my will, to make an unseemly request and to ask you to give me something that is very dear to you, and no wonder, for your hard fortune has left you no other pleasure or comfort in life—I mean your falcon, which has so infatuated my poor boy that if I do not take it home to him he will grow worse, and if complications set in I dread that I may lose him. So I implore you, not for the love that you once felt for me—that is no obligation at all—but in the name of your own generosity, which is greater than ever I found in anyone else, to give me the falcon, so that when it has saved the life of my son he may be your debtor for ever."

Federigo, hearing what the lady asked, and knowing that he could not help her, because he had given her the falcon to eat, stood with the tears in his eyes, and could not answer her a word. She thought that he grieved at parting with the falcon, and very nearly said she would not take it; however, she controlled herself, and waited to hear his reply. "Madonna," he said, when he had mastered his grief, "since first it pleased God that I should set my love on you, I have often had to lament my fortune, which has been adverse in many things, but all that ever I suffered has been a trifle compared with this. How can I ever forgive my hard fate when I think that you have come to my poor house, where you never would condescend to come while I was rich, and have asked me for a little tiny gift, and it is out of my power to give it you. I will tell you why: When I heard that you were pleased to dine with me, for which I cannot thank you enough, I thought of your nobility and worth, and I felt it only right to honour you, so far as I could, with a dearer entertainment and choicer fare than is offered on common occasions. So I remembered my falcon, which now you ask me to give you, and I thought how splendid a creature she was, and worthy to lay before you. So this very morning you have had her roasted upon a dish, and I felt I could not have put her to a better use. But now that I know you wanted her for quite another

purpose, it is so great a grief to me to be unable to serve you that I shall never have peace again for thinking of it." To witness what he said, he sent for the feathers and talons and beak, and laid them before her.

The lady, when she saw and heard all this, at first felt that he was much to blame for having killed so noble a creature to give a woman something to eat, but when she thought of his greatness of soul, which poverty had no power to abase, she commended him in her secret heart. Having no hope now of getting the falcon, and fearing for her son's health, she took her leave in very low spirits, and returned to her son, who before many days, whether because he was disappointed about the falcon, or perhaps because his disease ran its natural course, died, and left his mother inconsolable. And she, though she continued in great sorrow, yet being rich and still in the flower of her age, was urged by her brothers to marry again. She had no mind to another marriage, yet being plagued without ceasing by her brothers, she called to mind Federigo's loftiness of character, and especially the magnificence of his generosity in sacrificing so noble a falcon to do her honour, and she said to them, "I am well content to stay as I am, if only you would leave me in peace; but if you insist on my marrying again, I must tell you that I will certainly never marry anyone unless it be Federigo degli Alberighi." Then her brothers laughed at her, and said, "You silly creature, do you know what you are talking about? How can you take him for a husband; he has not a farthing in the world." But she replied, "I know that quite well, but I think it is better to marry a man ill-provided with wealth, than to marry wealth ill-provided with a man." The brothers, seeing that her mind was fixed, and knowing Federigo for a man of mark, poor though he was, fell in with her wishes, and gave her to him, with all that belonged to her. And he seeing that a lady of such worth, whom he had loved so long and so dearly, was now his wife, and had brought him all her wealth, became a better manager than before, and lived with her in all gladness to the end of his days.

It would be difficult to over-praise the delicacy and beauty of that story. It is not tragic, yet it has a pathos as lofty as tragedy. It is not well adapted for the stage, as

Tennyson's distortion of it shows; the actual crisis is dangerously trivial—a housekeeper's dilemma. It is perfectly adapted for Boccaccio's narrative method with interspersed speeches which take us into the confidence of the characters. It is only one proof out of many that he can take the stuff of daily life, stuff that would be rejected offhand by more ambitious writers, and can wring from it effects that poetry might well envy.

The prose style of Boccaccio was dominant in narrative literature for centuries, yet it will disappoint those who test it by modern standards, and it misled many imitators. It is not a simple style—rather it is curious and alembicated, but this was for a sufficient purpose. The stories he had to tell were many of them very plain broad folk-stories, but they were to be told in a courtly circle. Boccaccio never uses a coarse word. He is very sparing in his use of colloquial expressions, which, when they do occur, have the more effect from their rarity and their setting. In this matter he is like Malory, who also preserves a single atmosphere throughout all his tales. The atmosphere of the *Decameron* is the atmosphere of the polite garden; if the exploits of clowns and rascals are told, the language in which they are told sets the speaker aloof from them in the attitude of a curious student of human life. The reported speeches of the characters, especially the longer speeches, are not dramatic; they are written to reveal thought and motive. When Tancred, Prince of Salerno, finds that his daughter has a secret lover, he causes the lover, Guiscardo, to be seized, and reproaches Ghismonda with her crime. She replies in a long speech, not truly dramatic, but none the worse for that. It is a noble speech, full of faith and courage and defiance. She knew that Guiscardo was as good as dead, and she felt indescribable anguish; she could have wept and cried aloud, but the pride of her soul disdained tears and entreaty, for she intended not to survive him; wherefore, not in the least like a weeping woman, or one who accepts reproof for her sin, she answered her father in high, careless fashion, frankly and courageously, without a tear in her eyes, and without a sign of perturbation in her soul. "Tancred," she said, "I am in no mind either to deny or to entreat; the one way would bring me no help, and I seek no help the other way; moreover, I do not intend

by act or word to appeal to your love or mercy; I shall confess the truth, first vindicating my honour with sound reasons, and then resolutely following the dictates of my unconquered soul. It is true that I have loved Guiscardo, and I do love him, and so long as I live, which will not be long, I shall love him; and if there is love after death, I shall never cease to love him. But it was not the frailty of woman that led me to this, so much as the little care you had to marry me, and the virtues of Guiscardo himself. You ought to know, Tancred, since you are made of flesh and blood, that the daughter you begot is also flesh and blood, and not stone or iron; and you ought to remember, though now you are old, what are the laws of youth, and how powerfully they work their effect." These are the opening sentences of this amazing speech, so exalted in its temper, so fearless in its humanity, so perfectly characteristic of Boccaccio. It could hardly have been spoken at a tragic crisis; it is too elaborate for that; but it sets forth the whole inward meaning of the crisis, and some part of the creed of the author. The story of Tancred and Ghismonda has been told a hundred times since first it was told in Tuscan prose, but the first telling has never been equalled.

We make too little of Boccaccio. The splendid palace that he built, with a hundred rooms, has not been neglected, it is true, but it has been used as a quarry by other builders. Chaucer, Shakespeare, and how many more, took what they wanted from it, so that we are sometimes tempted to regard Boccaccio as if his chief use were to lend material to greater men. It is not so; he was as fine an artist as the best of them; his method was all his own; he cannot be superseded; and his work has aged less than the work of those who borrowed from him. He has the elixir of life; he is eternally joyous, and eternally young.

The Red Grave

By John Westroppe

"Tom Davies do look to 'ave a wet laying."

Jehoidah Michael scraped the red mud from his boots against the sexton's spade and glanced down into the depths of the newly-dug grave.

June of that year had been very wet, and now in the heart of the rank July the world was like a huge sponge overfilled with moisture. The wood-ridge, the Beacon, and the up-lying lanes were not free for days together from cloud. The potato hawms grew into a forest waist-high. Lambs died, worn out by the weight of sodden wool; only the meadows throve knee-deep; the difficulty was to cut and save them. Never had there been such a year for strawberries, but the fruit was watery and full of maggots.

The Davies came of an old stock, as was shown by the row of crumbling headstones in the nettle-grown churchyard; sunken into the high grass and leaning all manner of ways, they stood to the north of the church, kept by it always in the shadow.

At that spot, owing to some formation of the ground, water collected below the surface, turning the earth in a wet season into a red mud, through which the spade squelched in the digging. Some inches of red water had already oozed into the grave, which would be full before morning.

"Joyda," after knocking the accumulated mud from his spade against the nearest of the headstones, put it over his shoulder—"shouldered his bagginets," as he put it humorously to his own mind—and, carrying it to a corner, hid it within a hollow poplar that in the winter used to cover all the gravestones with skeleton leaves.

The low-browed house beyond the churchyard wall scowled at him over a yew cut square at the top a little

below the upper windows. It may have belonged at one time to a farm of some size and prosperity, but except for a large half-ruined barn and a yard overgrown with nettles, retained no trace of possible former well-being. Indeed, how a house of such size could ever have been supported by even a-many acres of starved hill-land was a question not easy to answer; as it was, the Davies' family owned nothing but the house, a meagre paddock behind it, another in front, and a run-to-seed neglected garden.

It was the late owner who now lay, through four of the muggy, reeking days, awaiting burial. Besides the redoubtable "Willyam," he had a younger son, Adam, a cripple of one or two and twenty, who now, alone save for the corpse, occupied the gaunt house.

Old Davies had been a peculiar man in his way. During several years he had made a practice of standing at his door of a wet or snowy Sunday morning, watching for the Vicar's tall, stooped figure; when it appeared, a blur upon the steamy distance, he would retreat into the house, banging the door after him. If, as might happen once in a course of years, the Vicar did not come, he would walk up the grass lane to the church, and sit, regardless of rheumatism, on the green, mildewed seat of the porch, formulating a complaint to the Bishop.

I suppose that there must at one time have been a population near the church to give a reason for its existence; but at the time of which I write the "Tump," as the farm was called, was the only dwelling within miles, and the scattered people beyond that radius preferred "Pennywell" (Pennoel), or Bethel Chapel, near them. It was not a singular instance.

There are churches, sole relicts of hamlets long worn down, all over the hills, sometimes in the oddest places. The curate of Mynnydd, for instance, could not even ride to his church, so thrust away was it among the woods and the "wet meadows" that were never dry and often under water. Sometimes his congregation numbered half a dozen; sometimes two; frequently there was no congregation at all. All these churches are green, walls and roofs alike, and sleep away their time upon the earth peacefully enough, with swallows and little ferns thriving in the towers, and cobwebs and butterfly-wings on the windows'

diamond panes. Inside they are very cold, very dark, very silent.

Joyda Michael, in passing the farm gates, stopped for a moment to look through. The rain fell in large separate drops. When, taking advantage of the shelter of the wall to light his pipe, he found his match-box empty, he swore.

Then he searched diligently in various pockets in hopes of a stray lucifer, and swore again.

For hospitality, the house in front of him was useless. He wondered, with a grin, how old Davies would like a grave of his digging.

He was just putting the sack which served as a great-coat over his head and shoulders, when the house door opened and a head thrust itself out into the rain.

"'Ee'd best come in."

Jehoidah was in no wise abashed.

"Thank 'ee, Adam, I don't say as I 'ont, if Willyam be'nt at home."

Willyam was the elder son of Tom Davies; between him and "Joyda" lay old scores.

The cripple looked at him with awakened interest.

"Be 'ee the man as a'most did for 'im a while a-gone?"

Joyd grinned.

"Willy-am and me be'nt azackly *mates*, 'ee knows."

Adam Davies nodded, and motioned him in, preceding him along the narrow stone passage, dark with damp.

There was a fire in the living room, which was in as great a state of confusion as its scanty, cumbersome furniture allowed.

Joyd sat down on the settle beside the hearth and lighted his pipe, keeping a speculative eye on his companion, who with slow, awkward movements went to the tall eight-day clock beside the dresser and opened its door. When he turned again he had a bottle in his hand, which he placed upon the table.

"Be that there where 'ee do keep he, Adam?"

Adam jerked a thumb towards the ceiling.

"T'owd man keep he there; never did 'e give man or beast wot 'e could keep."

"'Ee 'ad a nicish couple to live along o', Adam. Owd Tom and Willy-am; I do suppose now, as 'ee wasn't overfond of they."

The other made no reply, but took from the dresser a couple of mugs, and pouring some spirit into each, sat upon the table, with his uneven limbs gathered up under him. He looked so eldritch in the gloomy kitchen that Jehoidah let his pipe go out in contemplating him, and had to relight it.

"'Ee may well look at a 'andsome lot like this 'ere," ejaculated the object of his attention. "Do 'ee know why I asked of 'ee in?"

"Well there, Adam Davies, since 'ee mention of it, it do beat me; I be'nt so friendly like to this 'ere family. If either o' they two as we were a-mentioning were a-setting where 'ee be, I don't say as 'ow I should 'ave a drop o' *their* powering; they'd either on 'em pison of me cheerful."

"That be why," said the cripple with a short laugh, taking up a mug. "'Ere, do 'ee drink to one of 'em, and I'll drink to t'other: snug quarters to both."

He tossed off the liquor, and refilled the mug.

"Rum, ain't it?" Joyd remarked. "'Ere be me, a-drinking 'is liquor, arter digging of 'is grave. But it be'nt much good wishing any manner o' luck to 'im up aboove *there*"—jerking a thumb towards the ceiling. "And it do go agin me drinking to Willy-am. The owd man and me wasn't much to boast on in t' way o' friends; we 'ad a fight once wot lasted his life-long."

"Ah!" said the cripple, leaning towards him greedily, "what war it about?"

"Times agone, a-fore 'ee was born, O'd Tom took to preaching; after that t' passon 'ad turned 'im off from being chutch-warden, because on the poor's money not finding its way to anywheres as could be heerd on. Uncommon fine preacher he war. Owd Nick 'adn't ne'r a chance wi' Owd Tom. Maybe it be the same now.

"Howsomever, one Sunday there war a great meeting on the Green, and Owd Tom bullicked it out like a good 'un, when what should 'e do but p'int me hout wi' 'is 'and. Sez 'e, 'O do 'ee see the black sheep as is bound wi' chains o' sin.'

"That there be too much for me, so I sez:

"'''Adn't 'ee best be a-going 'ome and loose t' missus, Tom, as 'ee do keep chained to t' chimney-piece?'

"We didn't 'ear no more o' chains for a bit."

In the silence that followed, the tall clock struck six.

Joyd put down his glass, and, after refilling and lighting his pipe, rose to depart; the atmosphere was not congenial; the figure on the table took no notice of his movements. He drew the sack coat-wise over his shoulders, and giving a parting glance, half curious, half compassionate at it, tramped down the damp, flagged passage and out into the rainy evening. When the gate clapped behind him, he drew two or three deep breaths, looked back and up at the house, shook his head significantly, and trudged away along the wet road, narrowed by the forward leaning of the long drenched grass and ferns from either side.

For more than half an hour he passed no living thing, save a stray pig drawn close to the sheltering side of a ruined cottage; with its nose round the corner, it waited the lifting of the rain.

That would be long enough. It thickened from a mist to a drizzle, and then to a downpour, before Jehoidah reached the pile of ruins where the Mormons had once lived.

Back from the road, where the trees of the forest ran out into a narrow belt of larch before giving way to the fields, stood a gigantic hollow beech, as old, but probably no older, than the flourishing thick-set yew on the road-side.

Although little of the trunk was left but bark, this beech's great branches spread out round it, making a shadow to a distance; the larch surrounded it on three sides; there, if anywhere, would be shelter from the weather—at least, until it were certain to last all night. Also he had left some property hidden in the old tree, about which he was anxious.

He scrambled through the hedge, and followed a sheep-track leading to a pool at the beech's foot. The tree looked sound enough from this point of view, but by going through the larch to the further side, you became aware of a dark cleft in the trunk nearly as high as a man, and by stooping a little would find yourself in a small circular room, large enough to contain three people upright, and lighted by a straggling shaft of light from a knot-hole near the base of the main boughs.

It was not the first time by a good many that Joyda

Michael had taken advantage of this shelter. Also he had used it on more than one occasion as a temporary store-house, and had reason to be annoyed, on putting his head into the wooden cave, to find it already occupied by Mr. Coppice, the keeper, who leant easily against one side, with his long gaitered legs stretched across the opening. "Joyd" fairly fell over them.

It was remarkable that "Joyda," who had by no means expected such a meeting, said easily:

"Evenin', Mr. Coppice. How be 'ee? Uncommon handy this 'ere shelter."

While Coppice, who had his own very good reasons for expecting "Joyd's" appearance, exclaimed:

"Why, that never be 'Joyda' Michael!"

"Joyd's" sharp eyes glanced anywhere but towards the crevice overhead in which his interests centred. In spite of the gloom, he felt sure that the white tail of a rabbit was startlingly visible.

"'Ee couldn't obleege me wi' a bit of baccy, I don't suppose?"

The keeper shook his head. "Don't keep none," he said, shortly.

"Where have 'ee bin to get that there colour?"

"Joyd" glanced at the red legs of his moleskins.

"A-diggin' Owd Tom Davies' grave," he explained. He shook the wet from his sack and hung it up to drip from a branch near the opening. Then he imitated the keeper's attitude and waited; if Coppice knew nothing of rabbits, he would know no more.

"When I quitted work the grave was fillin' fast wi' water; t' owd man 'll 'ave a wet laying ag'in to-morrow."

"Damn him!" said the keeper.

"Joyd" looked at him out of the corners of his eyes. There was another long silence.

Broken by Coppice:

"'Ee be a plaguey good poacher, 'Joyda' Michael. 'Ave 'ee allays laid it to your own smartness as 'ee've never been landed in Court any time this twenty year?"

Slightly disturbed by the turn conversation was taking, but confident in his powers, "Joyd's" face assumed a look of virtuous reproach and indignation, with a touch of sadness

"Well, I'm blowed, Jim Coppice, if 'ee've any right to speak like that. We've bin friendly-like long enough, and a sensible man as 'ee be don't go listening to no lies; so don't 'ee say as 'ee 'ave, Jim Coppice, for 'tis more'n I can believe."

The keeper gave a short laugh, rose, and, leaning out of the trunk, held up his hand, but Joyd dared not rise and tuck in that damning bit of white fur.

There was a queer smile on Coppice's face when he returned to his former position.

"Sou'-west," he remarked; "'twill hold all night, till moonrise."

"Do 'ee know, Joyd, I've often thought as 'ow I'd tell 'ee 'ow it war. I allays knowed as 'ow I should tell some 'un, and 'ee be a smart man, as can keep a quiet tongue; the safer for 'ee. I couldn't be sure as wot it wouldn't make trouble afore; but now that that o'd devil 'ave gone Below, I'll tell 'ee of it."

"Say, did 'ee ever 'ere tell o' Meribah?"

"'Er as o'd Davies married last, as runned off to God knows where? I never did more'n see 'er, now and then, afore I went to t' pits.

"Wonnerful 'air she 'ad, like sovereigns, for all 'er face was white as a clout, but at t' edges seemed as if t' gold o' t' 'air 'ad runned in washing down into 'er face.

"When I cam back from t' pits, she was gone. Some said as 'ow she'd come to no good end; and some 'eld as o'd Tom 'ad druv 'er to make away wid 'erself; but I never knowed t' rights o' it, and I never heeds lies.

"'Air!" said the keeper, dreamily; "yes, she 'ad—*gold*.

"It began this way:

"When I fust come 'ere, I warn't five-and-twenty; I have bin, and am, a lone man, and will be. I was born in the 'oods, by the charcoal pits, and, like enough, in the 'oods I'll die. I've been nigh enough to that, times; but that be'nt got nothing to say to Meribah, 'cept as 'ow living alone with the beasts and birds and trees make a man take queer fancies, and never let 'em go; a 'oodman never cares for more'n one thing, and 'e cares for that wi' the whole on he."

Joyda nodded; he also had spent much of his life beneath the trees.

"That's 'ow I come to care for Meribah.

"Fust time I ever seed 'er was a nesh day, most like this.

"I was a-passing of the rotten old 'ell up aboove"—he jerked his thumb in the direction of the "Tump"—"when out o' the barn nigh the road I heard a crying, a little crying, like the wind afore the snow. The door warn't open, so I pushed of it with my knee, and it shrieked on its hinges. With that the crying stopped, and I heered the nise of a chaff-cutter, not working steady, but now a swish, and now a swosh, and then a stop.

"It was darkish in the barn, nobbut the light from the 'air-'oles striping the dark. While I stood, the chaffer went on again, quicker, so I thought as the farm boy had taken me for 'is master.

"The ladder stood up to the loft where the nise come from, so, putting down my gun, I climbed up till I could see over the floor.

"Lord! the little white face as opened its great eyes at me, like a frightened hare. It was a woman as was workin' those damned heavy knives, with the tears drip-dripping over 'er 'ands.

"I could see it by the light from where the roof-tiles was broke.

"She give a sort of a cry, and dropped on to the hay-trusses, 'most scart to death.

"I got up on to the floor and stood staring at 'er. Then I took a holt of the handles, and druv they as they 'adn't bin druv for time enough.

"I worked 'em perhaps a dozen times, when she caught at my 'ands wi' 'ers, wet wi' 'er tears.

"'Doan't!' she said, whispering; 'oh, doan't! He'll come and find of 'ee, and take on awful.'

"I couldn't push away 'er 'ands, and I warn't able to work wi'out; so I stayed and asked what in 'ell was meant by leavin' this work to a 'ooman. Warn't there no 'ands but 'er'n for it?

"'Leave it be,' she said, over'n over again. 'I'll tell 'ee 'e'll most kill me if 'e 'ears the chaffer stop.'

"The chaffer stopped then, and I put my 'ands round 'er. Tell 'ee I felt mad-like.

"'Darlin'!' I sez, 'doan't 'e take on; leave who ever he be as set 'ee to this 'ere, and come along o' me. I means it, every word.'

"I held 'er so as she couldn't speak, but I felt 'er shake like a birch in the September wind. 'Er 'ands were up agin my chest, and I seed what made me go sick—a weddin'-ring; but I didn't loose 'er. She pushed of me back a bit, and said:

"'I be a wife, do 'ee know? I bee married to 'im inside. Oh, God aboove! I wish I was dead afore I did it!'

"There came a little nise below, so I loosed of 'er, and signed for 'er to look who it was.

"I could 'ear 'ow she 'most fell down the ladder in going, but, leaning over, I seed 'er reach the floor where a boy was standing—'im as 'is now Willy-am Davies. As 'ee do know, 'e warn't son to the 'ooman, but to some other poor soul hid under the grass years before, and likely glad to get there. 'E war some fifteen year old at the time I speak on, and stout of 'is age.

"'Bee father 'ere?' he sez, kickin' at the barn door.

"'No, Bill,' she sez, timid like.

"'Thought as I heard of 'im,' he sez.

"She shook 'er 'ead.

"At that the young rip went off, callin' out:

"''Ave 'ee most done that there hay? I'll tell father as I didn't 'ear no chaffer.'

"I didn't say no word, but turned they knives till the fodder tub under was full; then I come down and called soft like on the 'ooman.

"But whether in the barn or out, she wouldn't answer none. Then I took up my gun, which that young devil 'adn't seen, and walked up to the 'ouse.

"But afore I reached of it, I turned into the churchyard, and 'id the gun in a 'ollow tree, for I couldn't some'ow trust myself wi' it for the next few minutes. Then I went down to the farm, and walked in through the door set open, and seed another door at the fur end o' the passage and went through that. An my 'eart as beat so 'ot went cold to see 'ow old the devil was. I felt crazed to think as 'ow I couldn't teach 'im what I 'ad come to teach; and 'e

didn't turn in 'is chair, but put the glass to 'is mouth and sez, after drinking:

"'"'Ave 'ee done the chaffing, 'ee lazy—Don't 'ee go for to let on as 'ee can't next time,' and he laughed.

"And I shut the door, and went away quick for fear as I should kill 'im where 'e sat in 'is chair.

"Now whether that young imp 'ad seen more'n we thought on, or 'ow it was, I doan't know, but it wasn't a week afore there came the great fire in t' 'ood."

"Surely 'ee doan't mean——" Joyda broke in sharply. James Coppice looked at him as if recalled to a sense of the present. Then said:

"That there fire was fust started in that bit of dry grass to the west o' my place; and if the wind 'ad kep' steady, it 'ould a swep' up and over afore day. But howsomever, the wind shifted north afore the fire got a fair start, and druv it some twenty yards to one side, where the green 'ollies with their nise like shots waked me; and none too soon, neither, for the thatch o' the back shed was a-smouldering, when I doused he wi' water.

"Yes, indeed; and I found arterwards, where paraffin 'ad been spilled to start the fire, the stopper o' a can.

"I showed of it to Jacobs one day, and tauld he to leave it in t' forge, where anyone a-comin' in might set eyes on it, and Jacobs tauld me as Willy-am the boy came in there, and, seeing of it, asked Jacobs where 'e'd got t' cap o' 'is father's paraffin-can from?

"'Do 'ee mean that there?' said the smith. 'Why, up in t' 'ood, close to where t' fire was started as 'most burnt Coppice in 'is bed.'

"And then if Young Viper didn't drop it, and say as 'ow it be'nt his'n arter all.

"Jacobs tauld me of it, and, though he do be a liar, 'twas true enough, I'll swear.

"So I kep' the cap; and, having of it, knawed as I'd a holt on t' two devils as 'ould give me a power over they if need war. The knowing of what I knowed, and t' fear o' my knowing more, see! 'ave kep' they off these twenty year, in spite o' what comed arterwards.

"I do wonder, times, 'as 'ow they never tried to put me away safe some'ow, 'special as I'm a man as is mostly alone; but they be cowards in the bone."

Joyda nodded. "No staying at all," he agreed. "Look 'ow easy I did for Willy-am a while since, and 'e 'most twice as big, and thirty year younger; I 'ad nobbut 'it 'im once, when I knawed as 'e'd never show no real fight. 'Ow long was this 'ere, afore Meribah—went?"

"Better than a year. Happen I'd see of 'er two or three time a week, happen not once a month. One time. . . . But there, what odds to speak; I ain't been a-nigh o' this 'ere tree for better'n eighteen year; 'e be 'aunted like. I shet my eyes, and it be allays Meribah, Meribah, since the time as I spake on.

"The time as it snawed, and I found 'er a-gathering a burden o' 'ood in the clearing over the rise; and I lifted of 'er, burden and all, and carried of 'er to this 'ere tree; then I made a fire o' dry pith, where that knot-'ole do make a chimney, and 'id 'er warm in fern as I'd stored 'ere, for fear as any coming by 'ould know of 'er being there; but none came . . . for hours.

"'Ow the end was? Listen, and I'll tell 'ee.

"I'd bin out all one day, getting ants'-eggs for the young birds. I'd bin fur, and it was late when I came 'ome.

"'Ee do know the fouer ways where the 'ollies be? Just by there I could ha' sworn as I heered some'un a-coming arter me along the pawth, some'un as warn't hardly sure o' the way, and turned o' times into them false tracks as is made by the wild things, rabbits and such. It was a little rustle there, and a cracking here; never close by, but not fur off.

"Having the matter o' the fire in my head, I kep' awake, and by turning in and out made it most impossible to get a clear sight o' me through the underbrush. I wasn't easy in my mind, thinking who it might be. I 'ad tried long enough to get Meribah to break away and go along o' me to t'other side o' the county, where I could 'a got a job in the Forest o' Dean; but she was that low as she feared to bring trouble on me, though God knows, the knowing o' what she was a-going through, day in, day out, was wuss of all troubles.

"But this night I was so oneasy, as I made up my mind as I'd go at once, and try and get a sight o' 'er, and maybe get 'er away. When I reached 'ome, it was dark

—dark as a winter night, but 'ot as 'ell, for thunder war a-coming. It was early in July, but a dry season; sin' April not a drop o' rain.

"In June a plaguey blight-worm 'ad stripped the oak-copse as bare as a frost, and barer.

"I seed, a-coming by, as the Mare's Pool was empty, and the rushes round the edges burnt to hay.

"I 'ad lit my fire to cook a bit o' victuals, the fust as I'd seen since daybreak, and was jest a-going to pull the board across the window (for it be'nt safe allays to make a mark o' yourself to one outside), when I noticed the white butterflies what caused the blight flying to the light through the window by 'undreds. This tauld me as some'un was a-coming, as it warn't a night moth, and must have bin shook out o' the branches by who ever it was brushing through the copse.

"Quick, I throwed the sack o' emmet-earth on to the fire, and then, the room being dark, put my 'and on my gun, and kep' still. At fust I could scarce tell the window from the walls, but a sort o' shadow stopped on the door-stone, a' the night grawed thicker there. Fust I thinks 'twere nobbut the yew a little way off, but presently I heerd a whisper:

"'Jim! O Jim!'

"And then the shadow sank on the threshold.

"It was Meribah—come at last.

"For an hour or more she lay near the fire, white as death and as still, 'cept fur a sort of shiver as took 'er at times.

"Then she began to moan; I made for to get up and fetch the help I knawed was needful; but soon as I'd stir, she'd catch a holt o' me wi' both 'ands, and scream an awful cry as cut into your heart:

"'Don't let 'im get us, don't let 'im get us, dead or alive!'

"'Undreds of times she cried that 'ere, and never a word beside.

"Before morning, she was the dead mother of a living child."

He paused, and wiped the sweat from his face. After a while he said:

"None knaws this to-day, only you and me, 'Joyda' Michael; and I'd lief as none should know."

"Joyd" put his hand on the keeper's shoulder.

"And none 'll know, Jim Coppice; if so be as it do rest wi' me."

"Thank 'ee, 'Joyd'; not as it do matter now overmuch. Up to now that old devil Davies might 'a took poor Lizzie, being by name his'n, and 'e'd 'a done it from 'ate o' me, and to 'urt me through 'er 'urt, 'ad 'e known; but seeing as 'e's dead, it doan't matter; but for poor Meribah's good name; and she, poor soul, warn't left much o' *that*.

"But 'ee do know by now why I've never 'ad 'ee up for the blasted poacher 'ee be, all for that saying o' yourn as Tom Davies (damn him!) could go 'ome and loose 'is wife, 'stead o' preaching. I ain't forgot it to 'ee, and never will."

"James!" said "Joyda," anxiously, "wot did 'ee do wi' the corp, arter?"

Coppice was staring out at the slender stems of the larch, shining with the rain, and for some time made no reply.

In his mind he saw the Mare's Pool with its fringe of withered rushes, its carpet of green-hair moss, where the hollow was deepest. Until that June twenty years before it had not been empty since the memory of man, and it had been full since.

"Joyd" repeated his question.

"As I did sit there, trying to quiet the miserable babby as whimpered like a dying 'are, it came to me as I must bear in mind Meribah's words: not to let 'em get 'er dead or alive; and I turned of it over in my mind till I thought on a place where she would lie quiet if anywheres.

"I drawed the shutter over the window, and gived the child a bit o' sop to suck—tell 'ee I skuss cared if it lived or died, since all the love I 'ad lay stark by the fireside—then I took a spade, went out, locking the door, and went in the grey dawn to the place; where that be, 'tis better not to say.

"I dug down and down through the roots o' the trees a goodish way; then I covered all over wi' branches and moss for fear o' the 'oodmen noticing, coming by early by chance, and went back.

"Fust thing I looked to see if the child was living yat, and most thought at fust as I'd a-had to put it wi' its mother, but it wasn't nobbut asleep wi' a fist in its mouth.

"Then I wrapped Meribah in all I 'ad, as was a great shawl I'd brought some time afore, 'oping as she would wear of it when we went away together, as I'd planned.

"A darned fullish thing to do when I think o't, 'most enough to 'a hung me if so be as the grave 'ad bin found."

"It never war, as I knaws on," commented Joyd, whose curiosity on the subject was great.

"I carried of 'er through the copse," went on the keeper; "(light she war, nought but bones and skin), and, moving of the branches, I put 'er into 'er grave; and you'll call it fullish again, but I couldn't abide as the clay should lie on 'er, so I gathered a mort o' poppies (foxgloves) and fern, and 'id 'er wi' they and put branches over that, and filled all up."

He paused, remembering how he had laid the deep moss over all, and straightened the grass he had crushed, the branches he had pushed aside, praying for rain.

"When all was done," he said, "'twould never 'a bin thought as a man 'ad dug there.

"Then I went back, and, taking of the child, put it into a fish-basket, wi' soft things under and over, and started for the gipsies' camp, over agin the 'Slaughter.'

"There I left the child, as seemed 'most dead, wi' my sister as married a 'Rom' man, and she reared of it, better'n ten year. All the way I went I'd turn and look back at the sky; it did feel like thunder, but most time, as 'ee do knaw, the river do carry of it away from we.

"I was a-coming 'ome late, and a good way off, when there came a tearing sound lasting for nigh ten minutes, and then the great drops strikes through the trees, so as I've never seed afore nor since. All o' that night it stormed, and for best part o' a month arter."

His thoughts drifted across the wet woods to the green pool where, under foxgloves and earth, moss and water, Meribah lay at rest.

He turned suddenly upon "Joyda" Michael.

"'Ee'd best take down they rabbits o' yourn, 'Joyda' Michael, as 'ee did leave up aboove in the tree, and be thankful as they be'nt pheasants.

"Rabbits be rabbits, I sez, but pheasants be pheasants."

. . . . . .

Next day they sank Thomas Davies' coffin into the red water, which oozed up, splashing the feet of Adam his son, the sole mourner, and hissing out through the rank grass.

The Vicar, his surplice clinging shroudlike to his lank figure; the undertaker's men; Joyda, leaning upon his spade; the old clerk, wheezing as the damp crept into his contracted chest—these, with the crippled boy, made up the group by the grave.

When the troubled water ceased to stir, the sole mourner raised his head, and spoke:

"Put 'un in deep; put 'un in deep, and turn's face *down*."

Blind Guides

By Norman Douglas

BLIND guides are those that cannot see whither they conduct us, those who—perhaps with the best intentions—are apt to lead us astray. And I ask myself whether the youngsters for whom a recently published *Life of Nelson* seems to be primarily intended are not likely to be misled by a remark concerning our hero to the effect that "during the exercise of his duty as High Commissioner for King Ferdinand he hanged a double-dyed traitorous villain called Caracciolo, and this with a promptitude that Jarvie might have envied." Surely Caracciolo's life and character have been thrashed out by this time! One is sick of the very name of the man. A double-dyed traitorous villain. . . . Are all the investigations of the past hundred years to end in a palpable misstatement of this kind?

It is sheer nonsense, of course; and might have been dismissed as such, had it stood alone. But it does not stand alone; it recurs in one or two other modern biographies of the hero; it is symptomatic nonsense. Symptomatic nonsense is always interesting, even when it only shows, as in this case, how easily serious writers can allow their judgment to be infected with that gutter-patriotism which ought to be confined to the mob.

If that be not a correct explanation, one would be glad to learn the reason for this modern change of view in regard to the Naples episode. For we all remember the old-fashioned condemnatory judgments of Southey, Palmerston, and their contemporaries; we all know what Foote meant when he wrote: "Be assured, dear sir, that the less is said about Lord Nelson's conduct in the Bay of Naples, the better." Has anything been brought to light in the meantime which might cause us to revise those opinions? On the contrary, minute and painstaking re-

searches by scholars of various nationalities now enable us to approach the subject from fresh sides; and from whatever side we approach it, we are repelled. The local Neapolitan records, as disclosed in the writings of Sansone, Spinazzola, Croce, and the rest of them—not forgetting Mr. Badham—read like a nightmare. It was a tyranny, says Lomonaco, "the like of which has not existed within the memory of man."

And this Bourbon tyranny, this unique fabric of vice and incapacity, is what Mr. Gutteridge, another modern encomiast of Nelson, calls *simplicity itself*. Mr. Gutteridge has a pretty facetiousness. Briefly stated, the simplicity consisted in this: Thirty thousand citizens, the majority innocent of any criminal intent, languished in the prisons of Naples alone; the executions were so frequent that the authorities contracted with the hangman for a monthly salary instead of paying for each execution separately; without Nelson's active co-operation, none of these massacres could have taken place. These are incontrovertible facts. Though some points still remain to be cleared up—certain documents seem to have been deliberately destroyed or abstracted—yet the archives are there; they cannot be distorted; they may be consulted by all who so desire. We no longer live in an age of oral tradition.

This is fortunate for those who care to ascertain data. For oral tradition alone can create demi-gods—hence their mysterious disappearance in these latter days of memoirs and newspapers. Were it otherwise, our British mythopœic faculty might by this time have elaborated out of Nelson and Caracciolo a saint and a devil respectively. But *scripta manent*. We are moderns. And yet there is a smack of the dim heroic ages in the labours of some well-wishers of Nelson, though their efforts are not directed to such useful ends as those of Hercules when he whitewashed certain other stables of yore, nor have they his prospects of success. Why not take a bolder course and treat Caracciolo as a solar myth? He was contemporary of Napoleon, and the thing might be contrived on the lines of Pérès' *Grand Erratum*, which proved the Man of St. Helena never to have existed. That would simplify matters—in the same fashion, it is true, as the Bourbons simplified the art of government.

Admiral Mahan treats the episode with seriousness, but has managed to involve his hero in a cloud of rhetoric, out of which, so far as I can see, two plain statements emerge. Speaking of the execution, he says: "Commander Jeaffreson Miles, of the British Navy, writing in 1843, was one of the first, if not the very first, to clear effectually Nelson's reputation from the stigma of treachery, and of submission to unworthy influences, at this time." And a little later on: "The abrupt execution of Caracciolo was an explosion of fierce animosity long cherished, pardonable perhaps in a Neapolitan royalist; but not in a foreign officer only indirectly interested in the issues at stake. . . ."

Nelson's reputation is cleared; and yet the act is unpardonable.

Who was to profit by the death of Caracciolo? The King and Queen. They hated him. Writes her Majesty: "The only one among the guilty scoundrels whom I do not wish to go to France is the unworthy Caracciolo," &c. And Ferdinand's characteristic echo a day later: ". . . To spare those savage vipers, and especially Caracciolo, who knows every inlet of our coast-line, might inflict the greatest damage on us." But they could not injure him without Nelson's help. They got this help, and Caracciolo was hanged. A submission to worthy influences, this?

Mr. Gutteridge, more reckless, speaks of the "generosity towards his opponents which was one of Nelson's most conspicuous virtues." This language will never do when applied to the Caracciolo case, which was the murder of an honest man committed with indecent haste—*a promptitude that Jarvie might have envied*—and amid other circumstances of needless ferocity. To put it at the mildest, it was an ungenerous and unsportsmanlike proceeding.

The question of Nelson's authority for this and other arbitrary acts rests upon a quibble hardly worth discussing. Though Admiral Mahan considers the commission under which he acted "regrettably uncertain," we may all be quite ready to concede that, from the side of the Bourbons, he *was* invested with plenary authority; that, with the fleet to enforce his wishes if required, and their sentiments so admirably agreeing as to render this step unnecessary, he received "oral instructions" (very oral indeed) from that

panic-stricken crew to hang, draw, and quarter the whole kingdom if he saw fit in the interests of "law and order." But we must still decide whether he was duly commissioned by his own Government. In fact, we are confronted by a variety of questions, such as: Can a British officer accept similar "instructions" from a foreign Sovereign? Or this: Under what conditions, if ever, can the British Government confer authority upon one of its subjects to interfere by force in the internal affairs of a State at peace with itself? Or this: When may an English warship be made the scene of a court-martial upon a foreign officer tried by foreign judges? Also this conundrum, which arises out of Ruffo's simultaneous existence as High Commissioner: Can Ferdinand of Naples, or any other human being, have more than one *alter ego* at the same time? And likewise this one: When is a treaty not a treaty?*

These and similar questions will be asked. Meanwhile, we may ponder upon this: the blackest of the thousand iniquities of Ferdinand, that of breaking faith with his own people, was committed by the aid of the British fleet. For Nelson was love-blinded from the first moment. On his arrival at Naples, says a contemporary, "the cries of joy were such that one could not refrain from tears, thinking of the consolation."† But how quickly he undeceived those oppressed citizens, of whom he naïvely writes that they welcomed him as "our liberator"! Micheroux, though he perjured himself for the worthless Méjean, had at least a certain tolerance; Ruffo, though he had little tolerance, could at least respect a treaty; these and other men were bound to the Bourbon cause by sentiments of loyalty and the hope of preferment, and yet Nelson the outsider, who was not paid for his services nor nursed in

* The answer is obvious—when it can be broken with impunity. It needs little penetration to see that the words of Ferdinand blaming Ruffo for treating with rebels "contrary to his orders," are an *ex post facto* inspiration of Caroline. Ruffo's position at the time when he concluded the treaty is clearly laid down in the first part of the letter from Acton to Hamilton of June 25th. The displacement of Ruffo by Nelson is due to the fact that the two ladies expected to find the latter less scrupulous in furthering their designs (nor were they disappointed); and in this connection I would echo the surprise of a reviewer (Arch. Stor. Nap., xxix., p. 122), that it should have been reserved for him, the Italian, to discover documents in the British Museum dealing with this case which have escaped the eye of Mr. Gutteridge.

† MS. in San Martino Library, Naples.

traditions of Continental Court-slavery, surpassed them all in obsequiousness, even to the extent of becoming chief executioner. That *Ewig-Weibliche!* True, he had his material reward, unasked but not undeserved.

I spoke of Caracciolo as an honest man. Let us have no misunderstandings or word-entanglements on this point. If honour means anything, then rebels such as he were honourable men, inasmuch as they identified themselves with a movement which has triumphed and gained the approval of posterity. What are rebels? They are, says Adam Smith, "those unlucky persons who, when things have come to a certain degree of violence, have the misfortune to be of the weaker party." It is therefore odd to think that Caracciolo would never have been a "rebel" at all but for Nelson's interference in Neapolitan affairs—since the royalists were already muzzled when this saviour of theirs appeared on the scene. Or, for the sake of greater clearness, I will put it axiomatically: to thwart the cause of a monster like Ferdinand is the duty of an honest man. Thus Caracciolo, who deserted what was wrong to follow what was right (and the rupture of sundry old associations involved in this step caused him no small grief of mind) was not a villain, but simply an honest man.

Nelson reports the execution in a postscript; casually, as it were. One dislikes this postscript; it is either disingenuous or illustrative of that hardness which characterised much of his behaviour at that time, witness the joke as to *tria juncta in uno*, or "See that some proper heads are taken off," or "Your news of the hanging of the thirteen Jacobins gave us great pleasure, and the three priests, I hope, return in the *Aurora* to dangle on the tree best adapted to their weight of sins." All this has a profound significance. The *bête humaine* emerging under the peculiar psychic conditions in which Nelson then found himself, certain unlovely concomitants of the older (military) class of virtues make their appearance, such as the brutality displayed in the above passages, the vanity which at Naples and Palermo led him to act like some pampered *prima donna*, and, interpenetrating everything, the flamboyant piety of his sentiments. In this last respect he resembles many of the great land and sea pirates who have made the political map of the world. Impelled by

that blind selective force which makes for efficiency and of which they are the visible expression, these race-instruments are apt to be genuinely convinced of the Deity's approval of their actions. They do not hesitate, like ordinary mortals, as to what is best—they *know*; the "best" is what their instincts prompt them to do, and it is a quite natural anthropomorphism that they should identify this "best" with the wishes of some superior being. Nevertheless, a few of the mightiest conquerors of mankind have cherished no illusions on the score of God Almighty, and it is to be observed that this kind of phraseology, which sounds well enough in the mouth of a Mahomet and was wondrously to the taste of Nelson, has become rather rare in the despatches of modern officials.

"Down, down with the damned Frenchmen" is perfectly intelligible when one bears in mind that during those momentous years England lived in a state of frenzy bordering on insanity. Our agents in the Mediterranean may well have failed to realise that, though we must crush the French, there were nations to whom French rule was nevertheless beneficial—nations who, as an Englishman then wrote, would have welcomed "Satan himself as deliverer" from despotism. Excess of patriotic zeal may well have led Nelson to execute Caracciolo, or Sidney Smith to give to the scoundrel chosen by Caroline for the assassination of King Joseph a written order enjoining on all British commanders by land and sea to respect and protect his person.*

How far the oppression of Napoleon necessitated the oppression of humane aspirations developing outside the immediate sphere of our warlike activity, might form the subject of erudite disquisitions; certain it is that we have changed our minds since then. Our poets were right and our politicians wrong—as politicians ever will be, when they put back the hands of the clock. We no longer disparage Italians for committing acts upon which we, as Englishmen, have justly prided ourselves; we cheerfully admit that in this extinction of national liberalism our Government played the part of the wicked fairy in the tale. It does one good to realise that Nelson was the last of his race to be taken in by the Bourbons, and that even

* See p. 66 of *Le Trame dei Reazionarii*, Naples, 1861.

God Almighty grew to be favourably disposed towards those "rebels" and their perverse strivings. Subsequent events, at least, point to that conclusion.

That being so, why do we seek to round off the anfractuosities of an historical figure like his as if it were designed for some special purpose of fiction? For two reasons, I think. In the first place, we have woven a mystic net of feeling around him and ourselves; he is the symbol of *our* courage, *our* patriotism; and if we hear him accused of anything of which we consider ourselves incapable, we resent it as an imputation upon our own characters and exculpate him with all the shifts and subterfuges which we would employ in such case. And then—his virtues and vices are those of the old military caste. The moral delinquencies of a great man like Bacon leave us cool, because he was a thinker whose traits correspond to a more recent development of our neural organisation. Bacon was a mere civilian. But the bellicose disposition of Nelson is a venerable specific quality, deeply engrained. Hence the detachment which is easily accomplished in order to review the case of a philosopher only succeeds, in that of a warrior, after something of a struggle. The roots of feeling, superficial in our sense of civic honour, lie far down and are hard to disengage where military honour is concerned.

None the less, were we not so incurably romantic, we might profitably set up a time-limit for the deification of heroes. It may still be odious to speak the truth concerning the lamented General Gordon, who brought destruction on himself and other brave men through disobedience and incapacity; but Trafalgar is a long way off, and, after all, what a relatively small matter it was, this Naples episode!

It may be said that I am "going for" Nelson even as Sir H. Johnston lately "went for" Drake. Nothing of the kind. I care not a fig about Nelson. I am only entering a humble protest against the principle of "useful mendacity." My contention is this: that as a nation we are quite sentimental enough and quite sufficiently tainted with Mafeking-night neurasthenia to enable us to dispense with such questionable methods of education as are exemplified in the sentence which was quoted at the outset.

Boys are sufficiently prone to hero-worship; the reverence for sheer truth wherever it may lead, a discriminating judgment—the domination of the reflexes, in short—is what they ought to learn at college. Nor am I doubting the writer's good intentions, which are self-evident; he is making for the best by the light of inner ratiocination; to instil patriotism is, *a priori*, a laudable motive. But I question the utility of falsehood or jesuitical misrepresentation under any conditions. The end does not justify the means; and this particular fable about Caracciolo will be exploded by every lad who becomes interested in our hero and cares to look up the subject for himself—with what consequence? He will learn to distrust and possibly despise an otherwise excellent teaching system. He will say what most of us are saying: Those masters of ours—what frauds they were!

Altogether, the time has come when the task of artificially cleansing the makers of history from their natural imperfections—the task of breaking up what cannot be divided, an in-dividuality—be it undertaken in ever so charitable a spirit, is one which no self-respecting man will assume. *De mortuis nil nisi verum.* We have learnt to condemn the teaching of many hopeless irrationalities, and the life of an English admiral is not to be written after the fashion of the forty—or is it fifty?—fantastic biographies of Saint Patrick. Panegyric stands on the level of the pious fraud. Shall evil be done that good may come of it; has anything ever been gained by denying a well-established fact? Surely the lesson of all history is that the propagation of non-truths is unprofitable to humanity.

That nameless protean evil, which *refuses to see things as they are*, sometimes takes the shape of patriotic emotionalism, and then produces an acute and contagious disorder that can nowise be tolerated in polite society. It calls for instant isolation. Fortunately, a specific is at hand nowadays in the shape of that modern spirit of veracity from which none of us can wholly withdraw ourselves—no, not even the ambiguous Mr. Gladstone. So it is worth comparing his attitude towards the Bourbons with that of Nelson. Patriots both, they stand at opposite poles of thought, and it is quite impossible to conceive Gladstone

writing (another postcript): "I must beg leave to warn you to be careful how you mention the characters of such excellent Sovereigns as the King and Queen of Naples": he spoke, if I remember rightly, of the negation of God erected into a system. Some persons, to be sure, are to be considered as atavisms. Thus, after reading his just and tremendous *j'accuse*, it is well to peruse the apologists *Gondon et confrères*. No cause so vile, that some human being will not be found to defend it.

It has been said that the morality of great men cannot be judged by ordinary standards. They create the types; it remains for posterity, that sees them in their true perspective, to select what is good, to approve or condemn. I conjecture that the shade of Nelson is now wandering in flowery meads of asphodel beyond Lethe, utterly indifferent to our opinions. I conjecture, moreover, that in condoning his errors we do not honour him, but merely dishonour ourselves; that the only thing which discredits neither party is to seek the truth, and to speak it, without passion or prejudice. In so doing, it behoves us to remember that the Nelson of Aboukir and Naples is one and the same person; he cannot be taken to pieces and separately appraised; he is not a kind of coralline growth, the minutest portion of which is but a sample of the whole. The older class of historians will explain that there are two Nelsons, and therewith dismiss the subject; as for ourselves, we grant that he is one and indivisible, but shrug our shoulders at the hopeless task of reconciling his actions. In other words, we are like those mediæval schoolmen who co-ordinated facts instead of subordinating them. When we have ceased to isolate two incidents in a man's life as if there were no organic connection between them—when we can demonstrate that without Neapolitan abominations Trafalgar could not have been won—then at last history may be entitled to its claim to be called a science.

But our biographers are altogether in an anomalous position. They are better-class ballad-mongers, who sagaciously dispute the fable of Romulus, but have yet to learn that certain new theories of conduct have grown up since they were at school. A few take pleasure in glacial objectivity, in chaste pen-and-ink sketches, and are safe; as for the rest, we read them less for what they write than

for what they are. Unenviable fate of those who aspire to be teachers of mankind—that they themselves should be studied with a kind of antiquarian interest! Their moral apparatus—how dim, how far away! If future historians intend to give us canvasses glowing with all the hues of subjective culture and feeling, they should seek dyes that cannot fade; since that old theocratic system of morality has lost its colour, its many-tinted woof has been bleached into a worthless rag in the dry light of to-day. They must take into their service a new and rational body of ethics; sounder ideas of what is right, and why it is right. Unprovided with this, they will remain what they are—anachronisms, museum specimens. They may still succeed in stimulating thought, but only as warning examples.

This will apply, above all, to the historians of men like Nelson. A large part of the crazy morality that infects our literature is due to introspection, which, instead of purifying, confuses us and produces a hypocritical state of mind that amazes other nations. For it is an open secret that though our English morality, while spontaneous, is of the highest order, it becomes rapidly vitiated by introspection. And thus we get a curious phenomenon, which I should call the lesson of this whole Naples business—to wit, that it is not Nelson or contemporary English politicians who are deserving of blame; they fought for a great cause, and what they did amiss was done in the heat of the fray. Nelson, the unconscious race-instrument, went ahead without much thought, and, despite Caracciolo blunders, ultimately made for the best. But these blind guides, his modern panegyrists, in striving to make for the best by the light of conscious ratiocination, make for the worst. He led us to victory; they lead us into the ditch.

For the rest, is it not an astonishing fact that races, in making for this "best," often fall below the standard of the average tradesman? Events long subsequent to 1799 prove that civilised nations are capable of actions towards one another that would be reprobated in a society of Todas. The ethics of modern state-craft: to what hairy, pre-pleistocene anthropoid must we go back in order to find a justification for them? Judged by the outlook of the costermonger, the violation of contracts, the massacre of the helpless and innocent, are unworthy proceedings. Carried

out by brave fleets and with the smiling approval of Almighty God, such deeds are straightway stamped with the hall-mark of national virtue. The fact is, no community has yet been so rich that it could afford to exhibit the ideal of goodness which is frequently observed in the individual. The aggregate race lags far behind its nobler elements.

Yet it moves. New race-qualities arise. We all of us dismiss, as unfit for the job, a nursery-maid who sees ghosts. But not long ago mail-clad warriors and princes of the Church believed in a living devil and other bogies, their minds swaying between insane terror and insaner hopes; existence was little more than a round of litanies and assassinations, its monotony enlivened only by the buffoonery of knight-errantry and occasional visitations of the plague. The mail-shirts doffed, there arose a brood of melodramatic ruffians, whose very garments reflect their lack of sobriety; a prey to every impostor, but hungering, themselves, for every villainy. Let us be done with this nonsense concerning modern effeminacy, with this maudlin cult of mediæval filth and roguery! Our mental texture, like that of our bodies, is grown more sane and more stable. The callousness of our ancestors is reprehensible in a man of to-day. We find it hard to believe that a few years back our aristocratic ladies were wont to flock in shoals to see criminals executed or to jeer at lunatics in Bedlam—these were the same stout dames who would shriek and swoon away on the appearance of a mouse. Such hysterical brutality may be picturesque, but it is not the stuff to breed from. We demand a nicer sense of measure and decency, having learnt that sensitive men, and not bullies, are the bravest. And as to the degree of sensitiveness required, what shall be the test? This: A man who can read the details of the Neapolitan massacres of 1799—even in a short *précis* like that of Madame Giglioli—without a feeling of shuddering abhorrence for their authors, shall be considered to lack the nervous organisation requisite for modern needs.

An orgy which, but for Nelson's infatuation for an illiterate harlot, would never have taken place. . . . This is the truth—an ugly truth, and one that will bear repetition, for to be of use it must, in vulgar parlance, be *well rubbed in*; its good effect depends, like that of certain ointments,

upon the pertinacity with which the operation of inunction is performed. Or, if we prefer to take it in the shape of a pill, why then, in God's name, let us swallow it without further grimaces and endeavour to assimilate it into our system, convinced that it will beneficially counteract the virus of crooked thinking with which some pseudo-historians are trying to inoculate us.

"The list of victims," says Fortunato, writing not in 1800 but in 1900, "is still incomplete——" Enough! We may leave the Market Square with its engine of horror, merely noting, as we pass, that to dub these martyrs "Jacobins," after the playful manner of Mr. Gutteridge, does not alter the fact that no men ever perished in a worthier cause.

What a jovial company they were, meanwhile, at the palace! A little *mixed*, I fear; but what of that, so long as they were happy? Caroline, the Hamiltons, Nelson, Speciale, the adventurer Acton, "my friend and general": Mammone, the drinker of human blood—kings, prostitutes, priests, *bric-à-brac* dealers, queens, cut-throats, hangmen, heroes—all a jolly family, carousing, hunting, whoring, murdering, lying, praying all day long and half the night: how the immortal gods must have laughed at the fun!

Fun for the gods, no doubt. But, humanly considered, a detestable business from beginning to end. . . .

The Grocer's Boy

By H. M. Tomlinson

When the train left me at Clayton Station, the only passenger to alight, its hurried retreat down the long straight of converging metals, a rapidly diminishing cube, seemed to be measuring for me the isolation of the place. Clayton appeared to be two railway platforms and a row of elms across an empty road. After the last rumble of the train, which had the note of a distant cry of derision, there closed in the quiet of a place where affairs had not even begun. It was raining, there was a little luggage, I did not know the distance to the village, and the porter had disappeared. A defective gutter-spout overhead was the leaking conduit for all the sounds and movement of the countryside. Then I saw a boy humped into the shelter of a shrub which leaned over the station fence. He was reading. Before him was a hand-cart lettered, "Humphrey Monk, Grocer and General Dealer, Clayton." The boy wore spectacles which, when he looked at me, magnified his eyes so that the lad seemed a luminous and disembodied stare. I saw only the projection of his enlarged gaze. He promised to take my luggage to Clayton. I walked through three miles of steady rain to the village, by a stretch of marshland so hushed by the nearness of the draining sky that the land might have been what it seemed at a little distance: merely a faint presentment of fields solvent in the wet. Its green melted into the outer grey at a short distance where rows of elms were smeared. There was nothing beyond.

This old village of Clayton is five miles inland from Clayton-on-Sea, that new and popular resort hardened with asphalt and concrete, to which city folk retire for a change in the summer. During the winter months many

of the shops of the big town are closed till summer brings the holiday-makers again. The porticos of the abandoned premises fill with street litter, old paper, and straws. The easterly winds cut the life out of the streets, the long ranks of automatic machines look out across the empty parade, and rust, and the lines of the pier-deck advance desolately far into the wind and grey sea, straight and uninterrupted. It is more than barren then, Clayton-on-Sea, for man has been there, builded busily and even ornately, loaded the town with structures for even his minor whims in idleness; and forsaken it all. So it will look on the last day. The advertisements clamour pills and hair-dye to a town which seems as if the Judgment Day had passed and left the husk of life. So I was driven to the original Clayton, the place which gave the name, the little inland village that did, when I found it, show some signs of welcome life. It was a clump of white cottages in a vague cloud of trees. It had some chimneys smoking, there was a man several fields away, and a dog sitting in a porch barked at me. Here was a little of the warmth of human contiguity.

When night came, and the village was but a few chance and unrelated lights, there was the choice between my bedroom and the taproom of the inn where I lodged. In the bedroom, crowning a chest of drawers, was a large Bible, and on the wall just above was a glass case of shabby sea-birds, their eyes so placed that they appeared to be looking up from Holy Writ with a look of such fatuous rapture that one's idea of immortality became associated with bodies dusty, stuffed, and wired. (Oh, the wind and the rain.) Yet there was left the bar-parlour; and there, usually, was a dim lamp showing but a table with assorted empty mugs, a bar with bottles and a mirror, but nobody to serve, and a picture of Queen Victoria in her coronation robes.

There was but one other light in Clayton which showed sanctuary after dark for the stranger. It was in Mr. Monk's shop. His shop at least had its strange interests in its revelation of the diverse needs of civilised homes, for Mr. Monk sold everything likely to be wanted urgently enough by his neighbours to make a journey to greater Clayton prohibitive. In one corner of his shop a young lady sat in a small cage, for it was also the post office. The interior

of the store was confused with boxes, barrels, bags, and barricades of smaller tins and jars, with alleys for sidelong progress between them. I do not think any order ever embarrassed Mr. Monk. Without hesitation he would turn, sure of his intricate world, from babies' dummies to kerosene. There were cards hanging from the rafters bearing briar pipes, bottles of lotion for the hair of school-children, samples of sauce, and stationery. His shop had its own native smell. It was of coffee, spices, rock oil, cheese, bundles of wood, biscuits, and jute bags, and yet was none of these things, for their separate flavours were so blended by old association that they make one indivisible smell, peculiar, but not unpleasant, when you were used to it. I found Mr. Monk's barrel of soda quite a cherishable seat on a dull night, for the grocer's lamp was then the centre of a very dark world. Around it and beyond was only the blackness and silence of vacuity. And the grocer himself, if not busy, would give me his casual and valuable advice on the minor frailties of the human, and they seemed as engaging and confusing in their directness as a child's; for Mr. Monk was large and bland, with a pale, puffy, and unsmiling face, and only betrayed his irony with a slow wink when he was sure you were not deceived. He knew much about the gentry around, those bored and weary youths in check coats, riding breeches, and calabash pipes, and the young ladies in pale homespun costumes who had rude and familiar words to all they judged were their equals, and were accompanied invariably by Aberdeen terriers. One evening I spoke to Mr. Monk of his boy. The boy, I said, seemed a strange little fellow. Mr. Monk, in his soiled white apron, turned on me, and said nothing at first, but tapped his bald head solemnly. "Can't make him out," he said. "I think this is where it is"—and pressed a fat thumb against his head again. "But you have to put up with any boy you can get here." He sighed. "The bright kids go. Clear out. There's nothing fer 'em here but farm labour an' the poor rate. I don't know how the farmers about here could make a do of it if we didn't pay rates to keep their labourers from dying off. My boys get fed up. Off they go, 'nd I doan blame 'em. One of 'em's in a racin' stable now, doin' well. Another's got a potman's job London somewhere. Doin'

well. But the kid I've got now, he'll stop. No ginger in that boy. Can't see anything five minutes off, either. Must be under his nose, and your finger shouting at it. He's got a cloudy mind. Yet he's clever, in his way. There's the door-mat of the shop. As soon as anyone puts a foot on that mat, the clock in my kitchen strikes two. All his fake. But he does rile the customers. Silly young fool. If there's two parcels to deliver, it's the wrong one gets first chance."

In a land where discovery had not gone beyond the blacksmith's forge and the arable fields, a native boy who had turned a door-mat into a watch-dog was an interesting possibility. There the boy was at that moment, stepping off his responsive mat, ill-clad, the red nose of his meagre face almost as evident as his magnified stare of surprised inquiry, and his mouth open. Mr. Monk chaffed him. I spoke with some seriousness to him, but he was shy, and gave no answer except some throat noises. Yet presently he ceased to rub a boot up and down one leg, and became articulate. He mumbled that he knew the telegraph instrument too. ("Oho!" said Mr. Monk, looking interested. "You do, do yer? What about learning not to leave Mrs. Brown's parcel at Mrs. Pipkin's?") Had I ever been to London, the boy asked, his big eyes full on my face. Had I ever seen a Marconi station? I talked to him, perhaps unwisely, of some of the greater affairs. He said nothing. His mouth remained open and his stare full-orbed.

There was one grey, still Sunday when it was not raining, the grey sky being exhausted, and I met the grocer's boy a little distance from the village, sitting on a fence, reading. The boy closed his book when he saw me, but not before I had noticed that the volume was open at a page showing one of those highly technical diagrams of involved machinery which only the elect may read. I took the book—it was a manual of civil engineering—and asked questions with some humility; for before the man who understands the manipulating of metals and can make living servants for himself out of pipes, wheels, and valves, I stand as would a primitive or an innocent and confiding girl before the magician who interprets for them oracles. With the confidence of long familiarity and the faint

hauteur of shyness he explained some of the diagrams in which, at that moment, he was interested.

We talked of them, and of Clayton; for I wished to know how this grocer's boy, who went about masked with a mouth open a little fatuously, an insignificant face, goggles, and a hand-truck, himself of no account in a flat and unremarkable place aside from the press of life's affairs, had discovered there were hills to which he could lift his eyes after those humiliating interviews with Mr. Monk concerning the wrong delivery of cheese and bacon. I was aware of the means by which news of the outer world got to Clayton. It came in a popular halfpenny paper, and that outer world must therefore have seemed to Clayton to be all aeroplanes, musical comedy girls, dog shows, and Mr. Lloyd George. The grocer's boy got his tongue free at last, and talked. He was halt and obscure, but I thought I saw a mind beating against the elms and stones of the village, and repelled by the concrete, asphalt, and lodging-houses of the seaside place. But I am impressionable, too. It may have been my fancy. What the boy finished with was, "There's no chance here. You never hear of anything."

You never heard of anything. That countryside really looked remote enough from the centre of affairs, from the place where men, undistracted by the news and pictures of the halfpenny illustrated Press, were getting fine work done. Clayton was deaf and dumb. Some miles away the smoke of the London train was streaming across the dim fields like a comet. We both stood watching that comet going sure and bright to its destiny, leaving Clayton behind, regardless of us, and as though all we there were nothing worth. We were outside the pull of life's spinning hub. Beyond and remote from us things would be happening; but no voice or pulse of life could vibrate us, merged as we were within the inelastic silence of Clayton.

We walked back to the village, and the boy said good-night, passing through a white gate to a cottage unseen at that late hour of the evening. Near midnight I left my stuffed birds, with their fixed and upturned gaze, and went into the open, where above the shapeless lumps of massive dark of Clayton the stars were detaching their arrows, for the night was clear and frosty at last. Sirius, pulsing and

resplendent, seemed nearer and more vital than anything in the village.

I walked as far as the white gate of the cottage where I had left Mr. Monk's boy; and there he was again, to my surprise, at that hour. He came forward. At first he appeared to be agitated; but as he talked brokenly I saw he was exalted. He was no grocer's boy then. The lad half-dragged me, finding I did not understand him, towards his home. We went round to the back of the sleeping cottage, and found a little shed. On a bench in that shed a candle was burning in a ginger-beer bottle. By the candle was a structure meaningless to me, having nothing in it on which I could lay an interpretive guess. It was fragmentary, meaningless, the erection which a child makes of household utensils, naming it anything to its fancy. There were old jam-pots, brass doornobs, squares of indiarubber, an electric bell, glass rods, cotton-reels, and thin wires which ran up to the roof out of sight.

"Listen!" said the grocer's boy imperatively, holding up a finger. I remained intent and suspicious, wondering. Nothing occurred. I was turning to ask the lad why I should listen, for the shed was very still, and then I saw the hammer of the bell lift itself, as though alive. Some erratic and faint tinkling began. "That's my wireless," said the grocer's boy, his eyes extraordinarily bright. "I've only just finished it. Who is calling us?"

The Flag of Ramillies

By Una Birch

We had been talking of tradition and of its tremendous power. I am inclined to think that it often paralyses original action, but Serena believes that it stimulates men to diviner life. In order to point my argument I spoke of Ireland as a country paralysed by tradition.

"What advantage is it to Ireland that legends grow there like weeds? What is the good, Serena, of saying Parnell turned into De Wet or that Granuaile still sails the seas?"

"Great good," said Serena, "if nationality is worth while at all. Traditions, legends, are a great good."

"Great good for poets and book writers I grant you, but the people, how do the people benefit?"

"Don't you see, don't you understand?" exclaimed Serena, moved to eloquence by my dull outlook on life. "Legends keep the smouldering fire of historic passion alive in the heart of every Irishman; legends connect the present with the past, legends safeguard and sublimate memory till the forgetting of old wrongs and old heroisms becomes a betrayal of nationality. The ordinary Englishman has forgotten Marston Moor and Naseby, the ordinary Irishman remembers Limerick and the Boyne; the ordinary Englishman has forgotten all generals save two or three, the ordinary Irishman remembers not only those who served Ireland but those who served France; the ordinary Englishman remembers two dim historic feasts—Gunpowder Plot Day and Oak-Apple Day—the Irishman's year is a string of anniversaries."

Serena smiled in a pitying, half-triumphant way, as if there was nothing more to be said, but still I did not see the great advantage of this long memory, and, after what I hoped seemed like a reverent pause, I asked:

"But how does it do good to the Irish, Serena, to remember so much?"

"It will do good to them in the future, and for the present it preserves them as a nation," she said with grave conviction.

"But, my dear Serena, how can it preserve them as a nation to circulate legends about Queen Elizabeth, Cromwell, and Napoleon III.? And Lady Gregory tells us in her *Kiltartan History Book* that legends do circulate about these rulers."

"Yes, but those are not the only legends," she answered, "there are plenty about O'Connell, about Sarsfield, and other Irishmen, and every now and again, remember, there comes an allusion to old battles with the English, to English colours taken, to English flags lying hidden."

I had heard a great many of these tales, and in my English way had been inclined to laugh at the quaint foolishness of a people who could wind themselves about with such cobwebs. Very gradually in my talk with Serena I began to apprehend the airy fabric of Irish nationality and idealism—a nationality builded of legends since it could not be builded of facts.

"Do you remember," suddenly asked Serena, "those auctions in London a few years ago when the blue silk jersey in which Charles I. was executed was sold, and the Chesapeake flag, and the bugle of Balaclava?"

"Yes," said I, "I went to see them out of curiosity."

"Well, you probably know that a publican bought them for his bar," Serena continued, "and when he died he was patriotic enough to leave the flag and the bugle to the United Service Institution, where anyone can see them to-day."

"I know, but the United Service Institution always reminds me of a mausoleum, everything deposited there has lost its virtue. I think I dislike national relics as much as I do national legends."

Nothing daunted by my want of enthusiasm, Serena, who glories in the deeds of the Irish Brigade, went on: "But imagine now if a colour carried into action at Fontenoy, or the drum which sounded that midnight alarm at Cremona, were to be publicly sold, wouldn't every Irishman

struggle to buy it to have the honour of presenting it to his country?"

Gradually I saw to what unpleasing conclusions our dialogue was leading us, and I tried to divert its course.

"I don't know, Serena, but we English are indifferent about such things," I said musingly, "perhaps it is because our nationality has never been stimulated by 'occupation' or 'colonisation.'"

Serena interrupted me hotly, "You mean because you have never been treated alternately as vermin to be killed or as children to be indulged."

I was not sure what I did mean, except that I vaguely intended to convey my conviction that there is a great gulf fixed between the English and the Irish, and that I approved of English methods of life and thought.

One wet day in Ireland a few weeks later we fell once again to talking, and this time with Irish people, about legendary nationality and the airy nothings out of which it is composed. We discussed the myths and traditions that have already gathered round the figure of O'Connell, and then I came to question, perhaps a little scornfully, what foundation had Thomas Davis for alluding in two of his ballads, *Clare's Dragoons* and *The Flower of Finae*, to captured English flags. I thought my ground safe, for the tale could not be true, it must be a mere historic legend, as I had learnt in the schoolroom that the English had never lost a regimental colour in action. Suddenly an Irishman, roused by my scepticism, began to talk as if with knowledge. He spoke of "colours taken from the Coldstream Guards at Fontenoy, of flags in Belgium." Rising, he declaimed the ballad of Thomas Davis:

When on Ramillies' bloody field
The baffled French were forced to yield,
The Victor Saxon backward reeled
Before the charge of Clare's Dragoons;
The Flags they conquered in that fray
Looked lone in Ypres choir they say,
We'll win them company to-day
Or bravely die like Clare's Dragoons.

Chorus—
Vive la, for Ireland's wrong,
Vive la, for Ireland's right,
Vive la, in battle's throng
For a Spanish steed and sabre bright.

There was, he said, a Benedictine chapel at Ypres—the very chapel Davis mentioned in his ballad—where it was still possible to see these honourable trophies. Serena and I looked at each other, perturbed at the dormant nationalism evoked by my chance remarks. Disbelieving, yet anxious, I made a sign to Serena that I wished to escape from further discussion, and she and I went home.

"I am going to Ypres, Serena. I can't bear it any more—this horrible boasting, I mean—and you must come, too."

And so we went to Ypres to examine the foundation of the legend, for mere historic legend I still persisted in calling it.

Everyone is familiar with this unspoilt Flanders town, with its churches, wool-hall, hornwork, ditches, walls. Everyone has stayed in the house of the Seven Deadly Sins and has listened to the carillon of the Cathedral, but not everyone has seen the flag. "Ypres choir" was not easy to find, and we went about asking at various convent doors for Irish Benedictines, and finally were directed to a large modern red-brick façade standing in a narrow street, as unlikely looking a building as one could imagine for our purpose. Unlatching the outer door and shutting it behind us, we found ourselves in a vestibule with a big door in front of us and two little doors on either hand. I pulled a bell, whereupon a tiny shutter was drawn back, betraying the gleam of an eye, then the door on our left slowly opened, as if asking us in, and we, accepting the mute invitation, found ourselves in a modern parlour. A large grille filled up the wall space on one side of the room and a green curtain hung behind it. The portress asked our business, and we begged to speak with an Irish nun. The room in which we waited was discouragingly modern, and we began to feel we had been made fools of.

"It seems silly to come to this place to find anything old or interesting," I remarked.

"We ought to have been warned by the red façade," said Serena quietly; "of course we have come to the wrong convent."

"There probably isn't a right one," I added.

Our desultory and dismal conversation was presently interrupted by the appearance of an Irish nun who pleas-

antly wished us good-day through the grille. We excused ourselves for coming, and told her our business, expecting to be dismissed immediately, but to our relief she showed no surprise, merely inquiring how we knew that the flag was in their keeping. We replied that an Irishman had told us of its whereabouts, and asked eagerly to be taken to the choir where it was hanging. She shook her head—she was uncertain whether we should be allowed to see it—she would ask some one in authority, and with these words vanished.

In a few moments she returned with the Mother Prioress, an old lady with great charm of manner, and we sat down, a quartette, to converse—we in two green velvet armchairs in the parlour, and they on two chairs behind the heavy black trellis. We were asked whether we admired the new façade of the convent; the Mother Prioress had never seen it, she had been professed so long ago, but she had heard it was very handsome. Then we were questioned as to how we liked Ypres, and presently in our turn we began to inquire for "the Flag." From the folds of her black gown the Mother Prioress brought out a piece of stuff folded in four, and passed it through the grille into our hands with a little word of caution to us to be careful; it was old, it was tattered, and they were always afraid to let it go out of their hands lest some one should take it away. Serena unfolded it reverently, while the Mother Prioress told her story: "It is the flag of Colonel Charles Churchill's regiment—a regiment that took part in the Battle of Ramillies, and on that field the colour was captured by Clare's Dragoons. Lord Clare, who was mortally wounded, rode after the battle towards Brussels, and one of his staff, General Murrough O'Brien, brought the flag to Ypres the next day and gave it into the safe keeping of the nuns."

"Colonel Charles Churchill's regiment?" I repeated.

"Yes," answered the Mother Prioress. "I think it is now called the 3rd Regiment of Foot; but, any way, it was taken from Colonel Churchill's regiment—of so much I am sure."

We had, meanwhile, unfolded the piece of stuff placed in our hands; to us it looked like the fragments of a Royal Standard. Two of the quarterings were gone, but two

remained—the gold harp of Ireland on a blue ground and the lion of Scotland detached from its background. Serena asked how it was that so little remained, and also why the flag was not left hanging in the choir. She was told that during the reign of the only English Abbess —Dame Elizabeth Jarrett—the flag had been removed from its place of honour and thrown aside, that it had then probably been torn, and that, anyway, the staff had been burnt for firewood by a lay nun.

To cover this English atrocity I quickly asked about the convent's history, and was told of the Irish ladies who had become Benedictines in that house; of Abbess Butler, cousin of the great Duke of Ormonde and friend of Queen Mary of Modena; of Abbess Arthur, the correspondent of Clementina Sobieski; and of their portraits in the refectory; of Lord Clare dying of his nine wounds, of his burial in the Church of the Holy Cross at Louvain, where so many Irish exiles found a last resting-place; of the Abbé MacGeoghan, chaplain to the Irish Brigade, who talked of "two colours taken" by his men.

Serena asked if they kept other treasures besides the tattered emblem she held in her hands, and the younger nun answered that they had many old books, some from the library of Sir Thomas More, and that, indeed, it was very hard to read aloud from his *Martyrology* at meals, the spelling and lettering were alike so old and so odd. Then began a tale of wonderful possessions. We were shown an altar frontal of lace, the work of Mary Queen of Scots, given to the convent by James II. We were told of red festal vestments trimmed with the gold coronation trappings of James II.'s horse; of a chasuble and cope cut from the brocade dress worn by the Archduchess Isabella at her marriage to the Archduke Albert in Brussels; of the invitation to the wedding-feast, which the Mother Abbess, being of an enclosed order, could not accept, and of the present of brocade in memory of the nuptial festivities. We were also told of the portrait of James II. given to them by James III.; of letters, too, from both James III. and Charles III., thanking the nuns for congratulations on their accession to the throne of England. As we talked, the whole forgotten story of Stuart hopes and pretensions lay unrolled before us. It was like opening the door into a new

world, a world in which historic perspective had vanished, and the past had become the present. "Wonderful, wonderful!" said Serena. "It is like going to a shrine in which the acolytes of a forgotten creed guard the ashes of a dead faith through timeless centuries."

Seeing our great interest in the convent's story, the Mother Prioress told us of a book in which we could find all there was to know, a book written by an old Irish priest who had been their guest at Ypres and who had collated their records.* From its pages we were able to fill in the details of the picture which our visit to the convent had evoked and to realise how completely its history had been entwined with Stuart aspirations and defeats. From that angle in the old wall at Ypres it was possible to feel the very hopes that animated the Legitimists, and the sad mischances by which they and their kings were overwhelmed.

In reading, we found that the Stuarts favoured this Ypres convent with their alms, and valued the prayers of the nuns. We read that Charles II., on the eve of his restoration, wrote to them from the Hague, and that James II. in a letter alluded to "y^{r}. Cloyster our Darling Monastery," and of his intention to make it "ye first in my Kingdom." We found that Lord-Lieutenant Tyrconnel, acting under the instructions of his King, summoned Abbess Butler from Ypres to Dublin in 1688, in order to talk over a plan for a place of refuge for Catholic ladies upon the Continent. We read of "her ladyship's" arrival in London, of her "waiting on the Queen at Whitehall in the great habit of her order, which had not been seen there since the fall of religion"; of her subsequent journey to Dublin, and how she saw a flag floating over Dublin Castle bearing the words, "Now or Never, Now and Forever"; of how King William's soldiers sacked her monastery in Ship Street, and lastly of her return to Ypres with a passport signed "William R.," given at his camp near Carrick. This passport is preserved at the convent. Abbess Butler went from Dublin to great poverty in Flanders, and Mary of Modena and James II., though both in straitened circumstances, gave what help they could to her nunnery, as we find acknowledged in grateful letters:—

"We all come by my poore pen to render y^{r}. Ma^{ty}. a

* *The Irish Dames of Ypres*, P. Nolan, O.S.B.

million of humble thankes for appeering so timely for o^{r}. Lautory (lottery!) w^{ch}. by y^{r}. Bountty will put us upon a good footing for fondation and building a decent houes. . . . After God you are our suport and may ye great God of armes fix bouth y^{r}. Ma^{tys}. in y^{r}. 3 Kingdomes for w^{oh}. we daily pray."

In 1706 we find the nuns "encouraged" James II.'s expedition to England with their prayers. Six years later they learnt with deep sorrow of the death of this their patron and of his only daughter, Princess Louise-Marie. Buried at the Church of the English Benedictines at Chaillot was the body of James II., there to await the restoration of the Stuarts and translation to the Abbey of Westminster. Dynastic faith of this sort impressed Serena greatly, and with a kind of awe she read to me of the magnificent funeral of Clementina, Queen of James III., and mother of Charles III., whose body was deposited "for the present" in the crypt of St. Peter's. She sighed, saying over, as if to herself, "for the present," and then aloud she added: "How hopeless faith seems in the face of inexorable events —think of the corpses of the Stuarts laid 'for the present' in France and Italy; of how long they must await the great day of translation. No loyal hands will ever again disturb their royal dust, no aspiration and no cause are centred in their tombs."

We read on quietly and rejoiced, so sympathetic had we become with Stuart aims, to find that Abbess Butler was deeply angered at the Hanoverian usurpation. Writing to Queen Mary of Modena at Christmas, 1714, she says: "I confide in o^{r}. Mercifulle Redeemer that at this sacred feast of his Nativity we shall have some hopes that all Christian Princes will Joyne all ther forces to overcome all the abominable rebels of England, a nation hatted by all good Christians . . . and may y^{r}. 3 Kingdomes blead for their Rebellion for which we humbly present o^{r}. small tribuit of prayers."

In a letter of condolence with James III. on the death of his mother, this same Mary of Modena, the Abbess again alludes to the unhappy state of England, for after saying that, "A death soe holy, A death of a Liveing saint and Martyr ought not to be Lamented," she goes on to pray to the "trinity y^{t}. gave y^{r}. Ma^{ty}. to us will obtaine A happy

Restoration and conversion of y^{r}. Ma^{tys}. 3 Kingdoms God of his Infinit open there eyes and make y^{m}. calle home a King y^{r}. whole world esteems but y^{m}.selves."

On and on went the record, and we picked our way through desultory pages, reading of the great Irish day of Fontenoy, and of how the news of Falkirk came to Ypres, news that filled the nuns with "ecstasies of joy," and led them to hearten Prince Charles Edward with a letter. We read of Prince Henry coming to the convent on his way to take command of a French force collected at Dunkirk, with the object of making an attack on England in support of Prince Charles in Scotland.

"Do you remember the story of the Maréchal de Richelieu?" said Serena. "He had a considerable contempt for Prince Henry since he had once kept a Council of War waiting while attending Mass. 'You may, perhaps, gain the Kingdom of Heaven by your prayers,' said the Maréchal, 'but never the Kingdom of Great Britain.' It always seems to me so characteristic that Prince Henry should be in church when the news of Culloden reached him, and that instead of jumping up he should receive it resignedly on his knees."

"At any rate, Prince Henry was pleasing to more pacific persons than the Maréchal, Serena, for look, the nuns say: 'We shall never forgett his wonderful affability and gracious condescendance in permitting his humble handmaids the comfort of Kissing his hand twice, when we had the hon^{r}. and happiness of enjoying his agreeable Presence in our poor little cottage which he vouchsaf'd to Enter, and heard mass twice in our little Chapel, we were all so transported with joy that we were not capable of observing a just or due decorum with regard to his R.H., which I'm sure he easily excused as he Knew the affection^{t}. loyalty of his Irish nuns, loyalty is really hereditary in a most peculiar manner to our poor afflicted nation.'"

"And when we call to mind Wincanton and Reading and the Irish garrison of Tilbury in 1689," interpolated Serena, "we know this to be true."

I read on and found that the nuns, wishing to give something to Prince Charlie to show their tender interest in his cause, set to work to make "a poor insignificant trifle of nunn's work—a soord string." At another time Abbess

Mandeville sent Prince Henry a cross "mead after the Irish fashion," and a little later congratulated him on his decision to become a priest, a decision which infuriated and completely estranged his brother.

In 1765 news came to the nuns of the serious illness of their patron, James III.; they offered prayers in their chapel for his recovery, but he died on New Year's Day, 1766, having been titular King of England for fifty-four years. Lumsden, his secretary, wrote to inform the nuns of his demise, whereupon Abbess Dalton condoled with "King Charles 3rd on King James 3rd's death"; she also wrote to sympathise with Prince Henry of York. The brothers replied, and with these letters the correspondence ends.

We had, meanwhile, in reading got far away from the problem we had originally set out to solve. It no longer seemed to matter whether the tale of the Flag of Ramillies was a legend or a fact. By trying to trace the existence of the flag we had been led into a Stuart world and found ourselves looking upon England as a foreign country.

"We must pull ourselves back into the present by really investigating the legend historically," I said firmly. "What actually happened at Ramillies? And what *is* the Flag?"

"Yes, that is right, do let us be practical," said Serena. "Did or did not the 3rd Regiment of Foot lose a colour at Ramillies? That is what we set out to prove, and we have lost in a maze of visions all sense of the importance of our quest."

We neither of us knew where to look for the information, and so, on getting home, we consulted Fortescue's *History of the British Army*, and found that:—

"The Buffs and 21st, which had so far remained inactive on the right, forced their way through the swamp before them and, taking Autre Eglise in rear, swept away the last vestige of the French line on the left."

This filled us with despondency, for there was nothing in it to account for the flag. As far as we could make out, Colonel Charles Churchill's regiment only came into action when the French were in retreat, and there seemed to be no foundation, in this book at any rate, for the line that at this point the "Victor Saxon backward reeled," nor was there any mention of a British colour lost.

"But the tattered standard cannot be explained away,"

said Serena. "What is this thing left at the convent on the day after the battle as a precious token of Irish valour?"

We were greatly puzzled, and determined to consult the only soldier we knew. Our talk with him came to this, that no mere regiment would have carried a Royal Standard into action, but that there are two possible explanations of the flag's existence. One, that it was a Royal Standard given by James II. to the Irish Brigade, carried by them into action at Ramillies and safely carried out again, possibly after having been taken by the Buffs and recaptured from them. The other that it may have been Marlborough's own colour as Captain-General. At Ramillies, when rallying the allied cavalry, he was unhorsed and narrowly escaped capture. If the English lost a flag that day, this may have been the moment, but Marlborough was then surrounded by French, not Irish, troops, which leaves the mystery still unsolved.

All our sage historic communings were suddenly cut short by opening a forgotten newspaper which had been handed to us by one of the nuns as we had left the convent. It took us both at a leap back into the legendary world. The paper was called *The Gaelic American*, and in it appeared an article headed, "THE FLAG OF RAMILLIES CAPTURED FROM THE BRITISH ARMY BY IRISHMEN." The headlines were in huge type; for the moment it seemed as though we were reading news, as though this exciting capture had just taken place, that somehow and somewhere the English and the Irish had fought, and that some historic regiment had just lost the colour entrusted to its care. Then when we came to our senses we read that it all happened on Whit-Sunday, 1706, and that the article was about the very flag we had been to seek. A wandering Irishman had found it before us, had exulted in it, and had written to tell the Irish-Americans of his great discovery. I seemed to understand his enthusiasm, and indeed my views on the value of tradition had been greatly shaken by my day in Ypres.

"Now," said Serena proudly, "you can see how the sight of the flag fans in an Irishman's soul the smouldering embers of historic passion; now you can understand how it conjured up for this exile the same vision of 'our mur-

dered priests, our rifled shrines,' which nerved those other Irish exiles on the day of Fontenoy."

Indeed, I did begin to see, and needed no further convincing, but Serena did not stop, she spoke as if inspired and did not seem to notice me any more. It was as if she had become the mouthpiece of the national soul of Ireland.

"Now you see how this faded emblem, once the honoured colour of a British regiment, may recall the green memory of the men who, in three years of battle, siege, and march, had dared on Irish soil to pit themselves against the first soldiers in Europe, against Schomberg, Marlborough, De Ginkell, and Würtemberg. Now you see how it evokes the no less vivid memory of those thousands of Irishmen who, after Ireland had 'acquiesced' in dynastic change, still fought on every European battlefield against the enemy of their country. This relic of past glory holds no incomplete justification of the Irish Brigades who, to save their Stuart kings, shed their blood like water under the banner of France, though never with so light a heart as when before them they descried the even lines of stern, hard fighters in the livery of King George, coats of the same scarlet as their own Stuart uniforms." Smiling through tears, she said, "It's glorious to think of, to remember."

I was struck dumb by Serena's face, she seemed as if in a trance. This, then, is what she meant; this, then, is the great good of legend, that it holds within itself a power of endowing men with such vision and feeling as make a practical Englishwoman feel suddenly cold and small. I had nothing to say, so I finished the newspaper article quietly and reflected that even if the flag-taking episode were a legend it would not really affect the situation. For the purpose of an Irishman historic legend is as forceful as historic truth, for the Irish are a race with historic imagination as well as historic memory.

I had come away from Ypres in a mood of investigation, but now that had vanished and I was left with the conviction strong upon me that all things are possible to those who believe.

Mr. Newton-Robinson's Poems*

By William Stebbing

A BELIEF is current that the present is a golden age for literature. All departments are supposed to be sure of the notice they merit. If authors are without readers, it must be their own fault. The view is probably untrue of all forms of intelligent literary activity but one, and certainly of poetry. In any case, the intensified friction and hurry of modern life would discourage from the reading of verse, for that requires study, line by line and word by word. It is of too intimate a nature for nineteenth-twentieth-century taste in its invitation to accept confidences, which implies a return of them. As for gain from the inundation of the book-market, though with a corresponding multiplication of readers, the tendency has, for poetry, been distinctly adverse. When readers were a select few, writers were not out of proportion. A volume of verse, whatever its quality, had a fair assurance of regard and sympathy, of a place for a time on the line. In these days, unless by some chance it has secured vogue, which may have to be paid for by flattery of the popular taste and humours, and is always double-edged, it is never really "on view" at all. Its very form repels the multitude.

It is no answer to my complaint that illustrious singers of the far and even the near past are read—more or less—and panegyrised. Every branch of literature needs to be regarded as a living thing, with a present and a future. I can as little admit for a defence that the art is actually practised. No thanks for this to the so-called "reading public." Natures with the poetic instinct in them cannot

* *The Golden Hind* (George Bell and Sons, 1880; *Tintinnabula* (Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1890); *The Viol of Love* (John Lane, 1895); *Richmodis: a Ballad of Old Cologne* (ENGLISH REVIEW, September, 1910).

help singing. Though no mental energy craves more for sympathy, this, with none, insists upon exercise. Inspiration must out. Equally unconvincing is the plea that any literary effort worth an audience will compel it. Yes, perhaps, but when? Half a century hence, or more? Empty as is the excuse for contemporary neglect of good literature, whatever its kind, it is flagrantly futile of poetry. All who love poetry, and wish it to live and be continually fruitful, cannot but have felt how meagre is the heed given to its pursuit; how even astonishing it is that an exquisite art should continue to be practised in the cold and shade.

A sense of this strangeness has quite recently been heightened for me by an accident which led me to view as a whole the work in verse of Mr. Charles Newton-Robinson. For any genuine appreciation verse, above literature in general, requires "reading," not "skimming"; and I have read, not skimmed. I am willing to believe that other writers to whom I have had less opportunity of devoting as much attention would similarly reward it. I have, moreover, no right to suppose that he has been exceptionally neglected. But I know of his labours in various directions, and that he has won distinction in many. At the same time his characteristic medium of thought and feeling has always been poetry. To that, for upwards of thirty years, he has given of his best. Having been acquainted with his poems as they appeared, and now having refreshed my recollections, I hope I am not presumptuous in expressing my opinion that when he writes he has a just claim to be read. I doubt also whether the right have been fittingly recognised.

His notes and themes have been various. In his earliest volume * he used a love-story as a setting for vivid scenes of the running fight with the Spanish Armada, when one autumn day the English look-out men suddenly saw—

> Like spell, or dream, or some strange wizardry,
> Rise a great crowd of gilded galleons!

At different periods more of historical word-painting succeeded—"The Ballad of the Battle of Crécy," † and the tale of Haring of Horn, singly stemming, on the mid-dyke, Alva's storming of Haarlem:—

* *The Golden Hind.* † *Tintinnabula.*

On came the Spaniards,
Burning for shame:
Little recked Haring
How many came!

"Harder you push me,"
Shouts he in scorn,
"Harder you'll find me!
Haring of Horn." *

Of the same order, told with the same proper ballad-writer's direct plainness and abruptness, is the latest printed product of his muse,† the realistically weird legend of the burial and resurrection of young and beautiful Richmodis.

But it is the rule of true poetry, with very few exceptions, to be self-revelation, and this holds good of Mr. Newton-Robinson's. From first to last he has mixed something of himself, of personal feeling, with the incidents as chroniclers have handed them to him. Thus Mandeville's matter-of-fact allusion to the great Dragon of Cos, flowers into "Thessalé," a melodious fairy-tale. We have Hippocrates with his wisdom and wealth. Then like a thunderclap bursts the anger of Artemis on father and daughter for her approaching desertion of the virgin ranks. Quite without reason, but as entirely after the goddess's manner, her vengeance culminates in the imprisonment of perfect and innocent girlish loveliness within a serpent's loathful coils. The five words of the old traveller, "Sche schalle not live long," are interpreted by the advent—after many tragic failures of greed and bravado—in the enchanted palace, deep hidden in wild woods, of an English champion,

True of heart, and young and brave,
Who rode blindfolded up the castled height,
And, looking not, the kiss of pity gave!
Then tore in haste the bandage from his head
And saw—no dragon—but a fair maid:—dead!

The apology for a bold adaptation of Ovid's story of Ceÿx and Alcyone is of the same nature and is sufficient. The beautiful myth has here been passed through a fresh mind and fancy, which have transformed and made it theirs. We are told—

How by the ocean sat Alcyone
Hoping for Ceÿx; till one watery moon
Changed, and the ripple of a first spring tide
Wafted his body from the shifting sands,

* *Tintinnabula, supra.* † The English Review, September, 1910.

Over sea-shallows, in among high rocks;
Where with the sunrise came his fair young queen,
For love and sorrow; for she knew before,
In three nights' dreams the shipwreck of all hope,
And came alone, save that her lame old nurse,
Fearing some evil, followed far behind.
And she beheld—ah! what did she behold?
—The queen gaze down the shadow of the dawn,
Calling out "Ceyx!"—and the body rise,
—The wan, pale body rise upon the sea—
And from it fall the panoply of death,
And vested in the glory of the gods
The soul of Ceyx cry "Alcyone!"
"Alcyone! sweet wife Alcyone!"
But she, the queen, all trembling with her love
Hastily tore Thessalia's diadem
From her pale brow, to cast it on the ground;
And without fear, or farewell, from the cliff
Sprang to the presence of her wedded lord!*

Melody and pathos are present in this very early poem, with the virtue, rare for youth, of self-restraint; and soon beside them, in volumes early or late, we come upon ideas as well as harmony and feeling. Multiply the lines tenfold, and they could not express better than the following six the deep truth that as nothing material is altogether lost, how much less can mind's offspring be:

When a keen thought starts from a seething brain
In the heart of a city vast and vain,
Whitherward may the wonder fly,
But it shall grow and multiply?
Like the winged seed of a meadow-flower,
Blown afield in a summer hour.†

As forcibly and almost as tersely the interdependence of body and soul—a problem attacked in vain by philosophers in numberless folios—is settled very agreeably, if less demonstratively, by "Genitus and Anima."‡ Well if human purblindness as in "Nyctalopæ"§ could be disposed of as comfortably:—

Blind go the many through the world:
Worm-battening moles, they delve unseen,
Their dusk and tortuous ways between
The start and sordid goal of lives unclean,
And should there be uphurled,
In those chance gropings, any grass-tipt sod,
And some emerge to feel the sunny ray,
They own the warmth, and smile,
And call it day.

* From *The Golden Hind and other poems*, 1880.
† *Ubi supra.* ‡ *The Viol of Love.* § *Tintinnabula.*

But the clear light, the gift of God,
They cannot see, and having sunned awhile,
Again to that grave-dwelling-house descend,
Wherein their birth is, and wherein their end.

If a poet is a thinker, as every poet should be, there must be moods in which he will see the dark side of life. This is Mr. Newton-Robinson's temper in "A Cry of the Streets," which is a shudder at once, and an indictment:—

"Buy a light! buy a cigar-light!"
Pitiful whine! I hear it yet
And see her shivering, cold and wet,
In the starlight: in the starlight.
A woman's form, but an eldritch hag,
When I turn, her face to see,
White as a skull on a gallows-tree,
With a bonnet-remnant of murky rag,
Like the felon's last lock of tangled hair,
Fluttering loose in the ice-cold air!

The chilly moon set early to-night,
And it wants eight hours to the dawning light.
Like a wicked spirit, in ire, or fright,
The north gale sweeps the empty street
With fitful showers of biting sleet:
It has blown the flaring gas jets out,
And driven the starving tramp to rout.
"Buy a light! buy a cigar-light!"
And O! the pity!
Wealthy city!
There should be any like her, to-night!

A cinder this from the furnace of London's luxury, passion, and heartlessness, with the converse—no compensation, or intended by the poet to be—the morning inroad across Westminster Bridge:—

They troop across the vibrant arch
Lithe lads and rosy girls
Who bring their country vigour here
To throb great London's heart.
* * * *

All are but as the bricks to build
The cruel Babel-tower,
That ever crumbling at the foot,
Still craneth at the skies!

Yet, like the universe divine,
Cold, passionless, and rich;
Vast ransoms London yields to them
That grip her by the throat.

Strive, strive away health, youth and strength,
And thou from her shalt wring,
Such boon as dauntless Jacob had,
By wrestling with his God!

* *Tintinnabula, supra.*

Power, and the knowledge of thyself,
Gold, leisure, great renown;
All these, and countless riches more
Lie clenched in London's hand!

Scenes, vivid both of them, and well worth painting, yet of a grimness from which it is a relief to turn to renderings of a trio of French pieces—to scenes anywhere else than in callous, everyday London—to a Conqueror's second-sight nightmare, to a lurid fit of poetic introspection almost morbid, to a fifteenth-century soliloquy by a compound, though historical and actual, yet almost unimaginable, of squalor and genius, beneath a gibbet preparing for the wondrous singing self. All three are admirable:—

A ghost sighs through Victor Hugo's "To-morrow."

To-morrow 'tis the charger that falters, foamy-white,
To-morrow, Conqueror!—'tis Moscow fired by night,
As a torch lit in the gloom!
To-morrow your Old Guard strew, dead, for mile on mile,
The plain of Waterloo:—then lone St. Helen's isle!
And then, and then—the tomb! *

Alfred de Musset's evocation in "A December Night" from a man's self, of his haunting, taunting double, to confront and judge him, loses in Mr. Newton-Robinson's sepia half-tones not a tint of the surprise and blank confusion at the self-portraiture:—

Wherever I would sleeping lie,
Wherever I have longed to die,
Ay! wheresoe'er on earth I flee:
There comes to sit beside my track
A wretch attired in garb of black:—
No brother could be more like me.†

The achievement, though having to compare with a version by Swinburne, in the translation of that marvel, "the Ballade which Villon wrote, expecting to be hanged," ‡ is perhaps higher still:—

Ye brother men! who after us live on,
Let not your hearts too hard against us grow;
For if you pity us poor wights, anon
To you the rather God will mercy show.
Here you see us hung: five-six—in a row!
As for the flesh that once we pampered gaily,
It is piecemeal devoured, and rotting daily,
And we, the bones, to dust and ashes fall.
At our ill-chance, O neither laugh nor rail ye,
But pray to God that He absolve us all!

* *Tintinnabula, supra.* † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*

If we cry on you, brothers, you must not
    Mete us disdain; though justice, for offence,
Put us to death; since none the less you wot
    That not all men have got enough good sense.
    Then intercede for us, with prayer intense
Before the sweet Son of the Virgin Mary,
That unto us His grace may never vary,
    Which hindereth Hell-fire our souls to thrall.
Dead are we; us then let no mortal harry,
    But pray to God that He absolve us all!

The rain has washed and drenched us from the skies,
    The sun has dried us up and burnt us brown,
Magpies and crows have hollowed out our eyes,
    And rooted forth the hairs of beard and crown.
    Never, one instant, have we sat us down:
Now here, now there, howso the breezes vary,
Swung at their pleasure, we may never tarry,
    Pecked, thick as thimble-dents, by birds withal.
Mortals! no mocking speeches hither carry,
    But pray to God that He absolve us all!

ENVOI.

Prince Jesus! Who o'er all hast seignory,
Care Thou that Hell gain not the mastery!
    Us may no commercing with Hell befall!
Men! be not ye of our fraternity;
    But pray to God that He absolve us all!

Far be it from me to complain of sombreness in verse, natural always in poetry, whether the poet be young or not; but he should be able to prove that he has a command of other chords. Happily, of this Mr. Newton-Robinson's successive volumes offer abundant affirmative evidence. Mark, for example, the many coloured glimpses of a mind over the fleeting scenery in a journey to the South:—

A sunlit valley, far below
    My track (that on a mountain hung)
    Where a bright streamlet wound among
Green meadows, mapped like spiders' webs,
    And fringed with poplar, elm and oak,
Tiny as mosses underfoot;
    With white-walled hamlets, breathing smoke,
So far below; they seemed but toys,
    At feet of mountain-children scattered;
So far below: life made no noise,
    All echoes on the peaks were shattered!
A heaven of dreams! a haven of rest!
To satisfy a poet's quest!

"The Brook"* paints movement of a landscape itself:—

At first:

Hurrying over stony shallows,
'Mid the meadowsweet and mallows,

* *The Viol of Love.*

Filtering through the serried rushes,
Now from rock to rock it gushes,
Now in eddying pools it hushes,
Where the grayling dart and shine;—
Branch and rootlet softly brushes,
Where the brambles droop and twine.

Then through silent, sunlit reaches,
Where the waterlily swings,
Flows the brook to lonely beaches;—
There its golden sand it flings.

Lastly, listen to "Spring,"* singing its own sweet life's history—

At first:

Silent I come
For my birds yet are dumb,
While Earth in her snow-grave lies:
Into her trancèd visage I peer,
And breathe a warm breath
On that semblance of death,
Till verdure dissolveth her bier,
And her winterly shroud
Like a storm-riven cloud,
Is melted away from her eyes!

then, having awakened and inspired her subjects, children and fondlings:—

To the moor and the fen
Of the Norland men,
I carry the kiss of the South:
The cuckoo, the swallow, the nightingale follow:
The bluebell and primrose, in thicket and hollow,
Upleap to the breath of my mouth!

until, knowing that she has done her work, and that her nurslings no longer need her fostering care, she bids them a regretfully loving farewell:—

But when the new leaf blesses
The gnarly vines of Trent:
When cherry-blossom tresses
The orchard leas of Kent:
When the pink may and the white may
Are scintillant with gems,
And the passion-wrought laburnum
Fires the green lawns of Thames:
When the oak is wreathed in yellow,
But the sluggard ash not yet:
When the song that hath no fellow
The nightingales forget:
When the lilac's hue is altering,
And the early hay is mown:
When the cuckoo's note is faltering
And the first wild rosebud blown:
On a sudden, on a morrow,

* *Ver Lyræ*, 1896.

To their wonder, to their sorrow,
  Men are ware that I have left them as I came;
But softly Summer nears
  While they dream in awed surprise,
And with deep delight of tears
  Fills their hearts and blinds their eyes:
  —And I am but a memory—a name!

And now for yet another species of landscape-painting—for every poet's stock-in-trade—the moving panorama of love. I offer no more than a pair of specimens of Mr. Newton-Robinson's capacity to deal with it. But they are samples only, for each successive volume of his by turns flutters around and dwells upon the theme.

For the spirit vision, let me quote "Amoris Imago" *:—

'Tis but in dreams that I have met my love,
  And where she walks I know not, on this earth,
  Whose child she is, or what her day of birth,
And yet what know I not, that love can move?

Uncalled she came, at dead of morning night,
  In such apparel as might angels wear:
  Brown-eyed as breaking dawn, with golden hair
As gilds a cloud the first faint shoot of light!

I lay entranced, as though my lips were dumb,
  My brain, my heart, for very joy adaze:
  Awhile she bent on me her ardent gaze,
Then said: "Thy soul called mine, and so I come!"

Next for a life study, more in detail. Eminent painters are expected to present their likenesses to the great gallery at Florence. An analogous requisition is understood to be made upon poets, though not for pictures of their own features. Mr. Newton-Robinson need not be too timid of comparisons with other painter-poets:—

My lady walks in gladsomeness
  Like Springtide of the year!
Her presence, like rich music, draws
  Through stillness, gently near,
And like an all revealing book
Her sundered lashes loose her look.

Those eyes are like none other lights
That glow in heaven on starry nights.
True twins in every intent,
As would my heart and hers were bent!
And lustrous each, and brown and large,
A fair yet disconcerting targe
For every shaft that mine can fling,
With strong desire to fleet its wing,
And straight its arrowy barb to steer

* *The Viol of Love, supra.*

Dipt in no venom save a tear,
Which draws its cunning to annoy
From sheer excessiveness of joy!
Her cheeks no less are shields to turn
  The weapon of my lips—a kiss!
So bafflingly they blush and burn
  To make the rash assaulter miss,
Till she may rout him with her eyes,
Revolt, repulse, regret, surprise!

Her hair is of the tawny shade
That on the firwood boles hath played,
And fretted with the gleams that note
The furtive squirrel's dainty coat.
It shimmers like a diadem
  Above her vaulted brow!
Her neck is like the lucent stem
  Whence lily-petals flow;
And mid the glory of her face
The sweet lips dance and rest, in grace.

Her slender hands are supple-strong
To rein the horse, or link the song
To mazy music manifold
The sullen keys would fain withhold:
To soothe, to flatter, to caress
Her chosen one, in dear duress!
And as in metal mirrors dim,
Or in a streamlet's current slim,
Faint semblances of beauty swim,
So let my verse, with reverent art
Veil, not reveal, her wondrous heart!

Her voice is like the lilt of streams,
  Light, subtly-varied, low;
Her mind is like the orange flower;
  Which blooms the whole year through;
Her moods their magic borrow
  From changes of the sea;
Her love is like the morrow!
  —What morrow comes for me?

I could choose none better than this—"My Lady's Portrait"—with its twin, wherewith to wind up the roll of Mr. Newton-Robinson's poems as yet published. Delicacy and warmth in conjunction are delightful, and the pair possess them. But, pervading his verse, is another quality all by itself, and to be weighed in the scale among properties of poetry. It is the power of exciting interest in the writer. Some great poems have failed of it, and many which make no pretensions possess it. It is impossible to read and approve of poetry without a desire to be in personal sympathy with the poet. Where a poet does not arouse this sentiment, there is a feeling as of a rebuff. Mr. Newton-Robinson's readers need not be afraid of that.

Editorial Note.—We regret to learn that Mr. Newton-Robinson passed away while the above article was in the press.

Synthetic Man

By Ajax

ARE you a synthetic man?

I took the question round to my friend Johnson the other evening, but he is a Public School man; he only stared rudely.

"Synthetic man!" he said. "What the Hell is that?"

The phrase, however, stuck in my mind. I tried it upon all my friends, male and female; I even approached the League; but nowhere could I obtain enlightenment. Some suggested reference to Mrs. Pankhurst, to Aleister Crowley, the poet; others merely stood me a drink.

"Rot!" they growled. I could get nothing more intelligible out of the men. "Come and have a bottle of Tokay; d——n the synthesis," said a pal of Harley Street. "*Totus homo semen est.** You know, like the cellula, cellula tag."

Everywhere the "manly" man—sport—sex! In despair I turned to the women.

"Tell me," I inquired of the most beautiful woman on earth in my sight, "are you a synthetic woman?"—and for the first time since I've known her she disappointed me. She folded her arms about my neck and kissed me full on the lips.

"That's a synthesis," she said; "the beginning, the middle, and the end."

But was it synthetic? I thought of writing to the most popular lady novelist. I took to reading Lombroso, Weininger, Ellen Key, all the biological and biogenetical authorities, and still I got no further. In every woman there is a criminaloid† instinct. Our Pope called her a rake. It is true that Stirner scoffed at the idea of woman content to be merely feminine, but only because he argued

* Virchow. † Lombroso.

she could not well be otherwise. Nietzsche, I had been told, was immoral. Goethe only gave me "the eternal feminine"; Shakespeare only Mary Fitton. Against the Doll of Ibsen I found Strindberg's matriarchy, love as a "sex battle." Even my typist, whom I overwork abominably, produced no light. "Oh, we women are only women," she explained. The Holy Book spoke inexorably—"love, honour, and obey." Mahomet, Luther—these were merely "manly" men, all kinds of eccentric smoke-room tales attaching to them. Even Father Paravicini, the Jesuit, who considers modern England very favourable soil for a Catholic revival, failed to provide a satisfactory definition.

"The Virgin Mary was the synthetic woman," he declared—and it was a poor answer; she probably was, if immaculate.

I tried Don Juan, Browning, the Elizabethans; but poets' women are always mistresses; nor even out of the total works of Havelock Ellis could I glean the required information. At the question, all the "nice" women I consulted thought I was trying to "pull their legs"; all the clever women looked foolish; all the "womanly" women showed me their white teeth, as they do on the stage.

"Ah, que j'aimerais," dit la fille à part soi,
"Devenir la maîtresse d'un roi."*

Such was all I could extract from France. Always the old Edenic trollop. Pandora, Gretchen, Dulcinea, Peachblossom, Fifi, Mona Lisa, Totty—none of these were synthetic, any more than Sappho was, or the Russian table-turning lady, or Salome, or Semiramis—wenches all, *la femme*.

And yet women are hunger-striking for some object or other not specifically indicated in the mystery of the eternal feminine. Something fundamental, evolutionary, epochal, must be going on somewhere, somehow; otherwise whence this devotion, this fanatical courage, which has reduced the Government and the British Law almost to the state of general paralysis?

No, no, my friends were right. If the Bible, Shakespeare, and all the nice women I knew were unable to explain "synthetic" man, then assuredly synthetic must

* Béranger.

be silly, like the obsolescent overman. Hell has gone out of our philosophy—almost with the Angels, but woman remains, and man remains, very much the same as in the oldest of times, for in some respects Hammurabi out of the B.C.'s was more synthetic than the present Chancellor, and far more so than the Tsar or the German Emperor. Why, women—and here, I must say, Nietzsche helped me. The education of well-bred women, he wrote, "is monstrous. All the world has agreed to bring them up as ignorant as possible *in eroticis*"—and this little sentence made me think profoundly.

The man is right, I reasoned—the fact is, the fellow has a flair. All women are trained to virginity, which is the idol of the sex. There could be no synthesis in such people, because virginity necessarily implies ignorance, and ignorance is the negation of reason. And this idol, based on the conception of the Virgin Mary, rigidly maintained and perpetuated by the Churches into our time, is it not the antithesis to progress? Obviously. So long as women are brought up to regard marriage as the supreme act in their lives, so long as the entire feminine sex is trained to virginity, mental and physical, until some man comes along with the freedom of the sacramental ring, so long assuredly must they be bondwomen—to sex; therefore to man. It had never struck me before in that light. But it is true enough. Here, at any rate, was a fact definite, conclusive. Woman, by her own education and standard, is a quarry—our quarry. Not to know is not to be. To allow man all the knowledge, all the initiative, all the personality of the egocentric and creative type, and to withhold from woman all knowledge, all initiative, all freedom of personality—is to give man the right, and woman only the bondage, of sex for the racial ends of motherhood. I, for instance, have been all through the schools and practically know nothing, but I have the *liberty* to know, to try. I can make an ass of myself if I like. But my sister can't. Her parents would be outraged if they caught her reading, say, Strindberg's *Married*, or *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. We put hairpins in her bed if we find her talking too tall or affecting "superior" airs. It really is perfectly true. A sex which is physically and mentally ignorant has no intellectual right to advise or ordain. Virginity! That's it

That is what women stand for. We, who know, who toil, who fight—we are her protectors, her keepers, her masters. In the East, virginity means nothing, but then Orientals have harems, whereas we have souls, and the soul Christianity has given to women is sex.

This train of thought seemed to me to settle the matter. There was no sex question. I felt so relieved that, just for a joke, I telegraphed to a little friend of mine, whom I will call Goldenlocks, who lives most of the time—on the golf links—far down in the country.

"Are you a synthetic girl?" I wired; and as I was rushing out that night the nasty mustard envelope was handed to me.

Certainly. But I fear you're an *acratic* man. GOLDENLOCKS.

An astonishing telegram to dine upon, I realised at once. Here was intelligence, comprehension, an avowedly synthetic girl calling me an "acratic"—evidently some horrid Greek derivative which no one I subsequently met at *The Gaiety* could explain. Aristocratic I felt I was, but acratic! No, I wasn't going to be bowled out in that way. I wired again:—

Explain synthetic girl. Yours acratically.

To which I received the following reply:—

Iliastric woman, as opposed to ludicrous femininity. Synthetic means hermaphroditic—a being subject to the conditions both of the male and the female, which is the future type of emancipated woman. Read Edward Carpenter; Grillparzer; Stirner. Yours, GOLDENLOCKS.

I spent the morning in great excitement at the British Museum, and, coming out, I had an inspiration:—

Admitted. I'm acratic, *i.e.*, the domineering erotic male. I love. Will you marry me?

And this is what Goldenlocks replied:—

My iliastric personality is centripetal—incommunicable therefore with the centrifugal sexuality of teleological man. GOLDENLOCKS.

I read the words in astonishment. Goldenlocks! My little Goldenlocks! the girl who drives a golf ball one hundred and eighty straight yards; whose skin is softer than a white pansy; she whom I have so often danced with, Tangos and what not—and—kissed in the garden behind the hydrangeas! Ah, wicked Pankhurst terrorism! It was

too much. I'm a weak man. I made up my mind there and then, and despatched this message :—

Synthetic be damned. I want you. May I come down see parents?

Here is her answer :—

Mother hunger-striking. Dad away acratically golfing. You're an ass, Jack. Of course. Come down by 4.20. Seventeen kisses. GOLDENLOCKS.

When Sweet Seventeen wires seventeen kisses, a man moves, even in the year 1913. I did. I bought a book by a German lady, Rosa Mayreder,* on the way down, and, opening it at random, as a fellow does on a four hours' journey with a serious work, I read these words :—

"For lofty souls nothing is more unbearable than the idea of bondage of sex. To be excluded on account of sex from any possibility of development, can but awaken in such souls a hatred against sex. For this reason firm and intrepid self-reliance, advancing with initiative, inflexibility, and strength of will, is more to be esteemed in woman than in man, because in a woman they show an overstepping of the bounds set by teleological conditions for the ordinary female individual. Nature has given the male the great advantage of allowing his teleological sex conditions to produce those qualities which are favourable to the development of free personality; whereas the female must *first overcome her teleological nature* before she can develop such qualities. Free in the highest sense—more so than the wholly 'masculine' can ever be—will be he who possesses sufficient synthetic force to attain by assimilation a higher and more comprehensive state of being. This force, which is wanting in the *acratic* man, is nothing else than a capacity for self-sacrifice. . . . And none but synthetic beings can be the creators of this form of life. . . . The representatives of higher humanity will be those whose psychophysical constitution enables them to break through the bonds of sexuality and thus raise and ennoble the inward relationships between the sexes—*synthetic* man and woman."

The expropriation of the expropriators, like Karl Marx! Here it was then, the synthetic being, the harmony of sex equivalents, type of the future—what I had been looking

* *A Survey of the Woman Problem.* By Rosa Mayreder. (Heinemann.)

for, all in a really wonderfully sane volume, disposing of the egomania of Stirner, the power man of Nietzsche, the sex man of Strindberg, a philosophy of the woman's movement, calm, thoughtful, detached—in short, the only stimulating and suggestive statement I have ever read of the problem. In a couple of hours I learnt all about acratic man and his counterpart, the slave paramour of ecclesiastical etiquette—submissive, teleological woman condemned by God in the Old Testament:—

"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Strange! the cruelty and vindictiveness of those words had never struck me before. I wonder how many of us realise the torture, mental and physical, inflicted upon women by this commandment, this moral mania based on the fairy-tale supposition of woman's first sin! Even in the middle of the nineteenth century, when attempts were first made in England to use anæsthetics in cases of painful births, the English Church protested—and still protests—against it as a suspension and amelioration of a divine punishment. And I read on, and learnt what this astonishing woman writes about virginity—the gyve which holds down the sex in the grip of dependence, making of their souls, their bodies, as the all in all of their being. I read on and on. Even about war Rosa Mayreder manages to say some new things, and she is always gentle, always a woman, with scant sympathy for erotico-frigid English militancy.

The gentlewoman, she contends, purchases her supremacy at a very dear price. She is forced to entrench herself behind a reactionary tradition. As the representative of the expedient she has fallen into a doubtful attitude towards all that is *natural*, for in the world of ladyhood the natural becomes the improper. From her sphere all the great and solemn problems of life are banned; the *salon* of the lady is nothing more than a gynæceum, inhabited by elegant, fragrant dolls whose first and continuous duty it is to decorate themselves and look appetising in order to please. And as chivalry degenerated into gallantry—and the gallantry of men in these unromantic days is already an anachronism—so the lady,

clinging to traditions that no longer have any meaning in the body politic, finds herself shut out from the mental progress of her sex, for her artificiality is incompatible with freedom of thought, and so with personality. Already, says Rosa Mayreder, the conception of the lady is beginning to collapse, and the results of this process of dissolution of a historic figure must soon become visible. Here we encounter a problem of modern civilisation. A new ideal of womanhood is needed, a type retaining all that was best in the decaying form, and developing organically from that form so that she may attain to that which the gentlewoman never was and never could be: a free personality.

I put the book down. Here was I travelling down to Goldenlocks, fluffy, frivolous, desirable, darling Goldenlocks, absorbed in the revelation of synthetic woman—I, who had never even got into the upper school. I tried to revolt.

"The significance of woman is man," I said to myself. More. Not only her reason, man also gives her her form. The whole endeavour of woman, is it not to realise with every possible means of cunning and development her innate sex self? The teaching of woman is woman, the creative repetition of the accepted type. To break away from convention is a virtue in man; in woman it is considered a vice. The central point or focus of woman—that which contains woman's all, her goal, her genius and her significance—it is her spiritualised and inherent sexuality. Hence the drastic law of chastity governing the sex; the law of modesty, which prevents her from developing or exercising her individuality in the rough and tumble of life; the law of type by which she is driven, more easily than a herd of geese, whether it be in the matter of dress or thought or attitude or morality.

I thought of the feminine puppets of British "family" fiction, cut and padded to convention. In these books women are depicted as "they should be," labelled, docketed, and no other type is admissible. Up to the age of eighteen all literary matter must be adapted to the young girl. After eighteen, she has done with her intellectual development. She is a finished product. With her hair, up goes the curtain of life. Of knowledge she has none—it has all been religiously kept from her. About sex, she

is supposed to know nothing. She is a maiden, consciously, superbly ignorant, furnished only with the graces of fashion and allurement, a being at once terrible and beautiful, whom all the elder women envy and strive desperately to resemble—a wonderful thing, standing there in the ball-room in her little *décolletage* and chastity, man's prize, the virgin, symbol and essence of life.

I have danced with dozens of them, and frequently, I must admit, found them very tiresome, chiefly because, though educated solely to please and to the polite accomplishments, academies and finishing places rarely seem able to teach them to move. They are not easy to converse with either. Their ideas are as bare as their arms, and what ideas they have are as likely as not two hundred years old. Difficult people sometimes! They fear originality, as they are taught to shun original sin. Their whole philosophy is, "Be ordinary." The slightest divergence from type they regard as a treachery to the sex. Nothing more cruel exists, and nothing so charming. They are the finest flower of discipline—"capsules* covering an emptiness which only man can fill."

I would have British matrons observe that I am not the author of that remark. At the time it troubled me exceedingly; for here we do get at some reason for a movement which, superficially viewed, appears inexplicable. Is Rosa Mayreder right in what she says about the type? Has the fetich of the young girl become a "hindrance and a danger" to the mental life of the nation? It is a grave statement, involving issues subversive of the whole moral and social life of civilisation still dominated by this cardinal idea of Christianity, enforced even to such an extent in strict Catholic countries such as Spain that there a man can annul his marriage without further reason if, after the bridal night, he can prove that his wife was not *virgo intacta.* Yet this is clearly what she means.

"We shall be able to know what women are only when we no longer dictate to them what they should be." That is her challenge. Beauty, the world generally thinks, is "the mission of woman," and maternity her vocation. But these are self-contradictory conceptions. The cult of beauty, admittedly for man's gratification, is in direct contradiction

* Laura Marholm.

to the state of mind and body conducive to the cult of maternity. Moreover, physically, maternity is antagonistic to beauty. If then maternity, Rosa Mayreder argues, is the grand vocation of women, then beauty would not be the chief factor in the valuation of womanhood, which it undoubtedly is. Maternity is not woman's chief vocation, then. It is a polite misnomer. In the existing conditions of man-made laws and government, beauty is to man the quintessential condition, as, in their hearts, behind the veil of good-breeding, all women are aware. To attain to a free personality, or even to be trained in a more efficient manner for their "so-called natural" office, women must accept the canon of ideal womanhood as that which it really is—"not an ethical ideal, but a sexual one, and by no means so noble in origin as it would seem."

Here we have a philosophy and a programme. Carried to its logical conclusion—and we may assume that synthetic woman will be logical—it means the breakdown of the whole Christian ideal and tradition of womanhood. It is sex-warfare—warfare, perhaps, conducted more within and against the sex itself than against man, who is by his training naturally readier to change and accept. It is the acceptance of the Oriental view of chastity. It means equality of sex freedom.

Taking the practical, worldly, ordinary man point of view of the problem, I confess I do descry signs that point in that direction. The fact is, life has changed so profoundly since the Victorian era that the ideal man himself has lost its significance. What can muscle achieve to-day? Conscript armies have destroyed the whole individualism of heroes, for where every man is a soldier there is neither merit nor distinction in being one. To-day the puny frame with a brain can govern continents. Money is King of this century. As the ideal of manhood etiolates, so necessarily must the ideal of womanhood.

It has. Even we acratic sex-men don't fancy Doras nowadays, any more than Phyllis marries Tom on account of his biceps. Sport has knocked all that down. The *salon* —who has a *salon* in modern London? Our drawing-rooms are meeting places for lectures and discussions on eugenics, sociology, socialism—problems such as the White Slave Traffic, the nutrition of babies, the woman's question,

divorce reform; as for dinner-parties, they are positively exciting, such remarkable statements do the prettiest women make about matters we thought they knew nothing about.

Our girls—they mostly wish to seem "out of love." The mystery of sex cannot be kept up on the golf links, at the Bridge-table, in the cackle of co-sex clubland. Even Don Quixote would hardly put up a lance for the furious females who charge orchids. The discussion of sex is the fashionable pastime of the day; one might imagine it was a new cosmetic, so pleased women seem with their "discovery," so curiously the elemental truths of life seem to astonish them. Yet it is precisely here that I find the paradox which fills me with doubt.

On the one side we have this picture of fighting femininity; on the other, the world which amuses itself—the sex-man and submissive woman—and every month the contrast seems to grow wider and more distinct. Here are a handful of women staggering humanity by a display of courage and physical endurance unrivalled in history, yet never was so much wealth lavished on women, never did women think more about their clothes and spend more on them, and never were the fashions which rule them so fickle or imperious. If there is any serious movement among women for free personality—freedom, that is, from sex dependence—what is the meaning of this London of sexuality, of frivolous joy-hunting, of music-hall excitement, of provocative dress, of theatres given over almost entirely to light entertainment, of a Press literally kept by women's advertisements, of shop exhibitions of corsets and underwear—all woman's fancy and pleasure put there and kept there to show women off to more advantage to man. For no other reason whatever.

The whole face of English life is changing. What man cares to-day if Smith tells him he is "no gentleman"? The gentleman is almost as antiquated as the spotted dogs who used to run under barouches in the Victorian era. Even old age has gone; instead we have old age pensions. Our girls go everywhere. Sex is all—there can be no modesty with the sheath, slit, or hobble skirt. Even the purdah of woman's toilette has vanished,—we know all about it from the shop-windows, and the quacks. Though we still keep fig-leaves on our statues, the modern tendency of

women is all towards unabashed display and nakedness; in fact, there never was a time when women were more publicly flattered, advertised, decorated, or bedizened, and certainly for no ethical, philosophical, sociological, or suffrage purpose. Blushes—we have co-sex pillow-fights in pyjamas in the up-to-date country house! Modesty—in conventional magazine fiction perhaps! Virginity—consider! With sport, our girl-school system, the existing freedom in society, the educational work of the Suffragettes, the Eugenists and kindred societies, the shops, the stage, the electric—can there be old-fashioned virginity (ignorance, that is) in such conditions? To ask is to realise at once the hollowness of the contention.

The fact is, though tradition remains, actually the position of woman has already changed. The theory of her has gone. Woman is to-day an economic force in the public life. In the struggle for existence she is already taking her active part, shoulder to shoulder with man, without mystery or false shame. In a word, the sex has come out of its shell.

The trouble is that it has emerged too quickly. The State, conditions, conventions, ideas, man, woman herself—they are all unready for her; and I am not thinking here of political womanhood, but of the sex in general, which appearing thus outwardly encased in all the old wrappings and trammels of custom, has disturbed the social equilibrium. Mere woman is naïvely ahead of theoretic woman, because she has already assumed what her fighting sister is still seeking to crystallise into formula—which is largely the reason of our objection to her. And so much is this the case that it may be said with confidence that in practice, though not in theory, the freedom of woman is won. Laws need alteration—the divorce laws particularly—possibly it will be well for sensible women to record their vote. Tacitly the public admits as much. But it won't be bullied. To woman generally, laws do not mean much, just as most men are astoundingly ignorant of them, or we should not have all these lawyers and fees. But she has discovered the new liberty, the new position of the sex, the new attitude towards it. And evidently she is enjoying herself. The bachelor girl, the self-supporting girl, the independent girl—she is as much a reality to-day, with

almost as high a social position, as the chorus-girl of acratic Comedy.

All this seemed to me so clear that I glanced casually out of the window, and, seeing the telegraph-poles flitting rhythmically past, I could not help wondering whether Rag-time also was synthetic. All America, all Paris, half England doing rag-time, and surely to no evolutionary or revolutionary end. Eve probably one-stepped Adam out of the Garden. It's no virginal dance, anyway. Indeed, it shocks me more than it seems to shock the mammas.

The sociologist of to-day cannot ignore the phenomenon, because it is symptomatic of the modern note and attitude. It comes from the most pampered sex in the world, the American woman, who got it from the primitive contortions of the niggers. And that, too, is significant. Between the girl who smashes window-panes for an ideal and the Turkey-trotter who dances for fun, there would seem no mental or moral nexus; yet in America the brilliant Suffragette speaker of the afternoon will Bunny-hug some "nice" boy round and round half the night—which makes a man think that the more things change, the more they remain the same.

I am puzzled. Synthetic cannot be identical with syncopated woman—and yet why not? Theory is no part of humanity. I see no scientific reason why Madame Curie, perhaps the most distinguished woman alive, should not enjoy a Tango with a well-groomed young man, any more than I could object were Mr. Joe Coyne to write a learned treatise on immortality. Life is made up of surprises and contradictions. Napoleon* playing on the floor in the library with the actress George is to-day of as much human value as the battle of Jena, and was perhaps the inspiration of the famous Code. As there is nothing final in life, so all laws, theories, conventions, ideas, and even ideals, must be transitory. We angle for a whale, we catch a stickleback. Does it matter finally? Don't we also sometimes tickle for a trout, and find we have caught a water-baby?

Absolute freedom. Yes, I suppose if *every woman* earned her living, she would economically and socially be

* *Mémoires de Mlle. George.*

free, as free as anyone can be in a civilisation which inclines more and more to the compulsory collectivism of democracy. That day would appear a long way off; and as for real freedom, what man, or king, is free? In idea woman is free enough, even if many of the professions are still closed to her. It is women who maintain the restrictions on their sex. There is nothing to prevent the modern woman from developing her personality, her instincts, and what particular aptitudes or talents she may have in any of the arts, in any science, or in any useful or economic direction. Creatively, she stands to-day unshackled. If her desire is unto herself, she need not take a husband, in which case she will only deprive herself of motherhood, unless our whole attitude towards illegitimacy is altered with the public denouncement of virginity, when obviously marriage, as an institution, has no social foundation. For the whole conception of Christian marriage rests on the chastity of the unmarried female. The father wants to know and possess his own children. Old-time chivalry was the knight of chastity, and our idea of virility derives from it. Take that idea from man, and its corollary is licence, leaving love as the sole law of maternity. But as love is no law, and never can be, such a condition must inevitably liquidate the whole status of sex. With an age which is ever increasingly losing its ideals, it is not altogether a hopeful prospect—at least, so it appears to me, who am unable to conceive of a non-marriage state in a civilised community either as a solution of the suffrage problem or of woman's independence.

At the same time, I repeat we men have lost not a little of our tradition—we are not the dogs we were—as civilisation in the cities increases, so are we certain to lose more of it. There is frankly nothing heroic, not much even that is manly—in the old sense of the word—in modern economic conditions, which are growing more and more material and selfish. Romance has lost its glitter in the grime and sweat of our foul cities; what romance is left to us, curiously enough, is scientific. The men who fly have romance. The workers in laboratories have romance. Young Lovelace finds it a sorry quest. There is no romance in modern war, little in drawing-rooms, none in the public-house. Boys and girls, we are all turned out of the

schools like so many automatons, thinking alike, acting alike, talking all the jargon of the hour.

What is to take the place of the "gentleman," the descendant of Christian chivalry? He stood for something very real in the national life; above all, he was the guardian of the gentlewoman. And what will take the place of her?

Synthetic woman, answers Rosa Mayreder—woman with the higher qualities of man. To attain to this type, she has first of all to rid herself of the conventions which at present hold her down, frustrating her mental development and individuality: she must be free, in the same way that men are free. But she can never emerge from the slavery of sex until she steps over the bounds imposed upon her by man, the bounds of virginity, which doom her to passivity. Once free, her evolution is inevitable. She will at last be able to decide what is the true vocation of woman and to develop accordingly. Vain for the sex to struggle against man; the ideal is only realisable through and with man. He will follow, developing as woman develops into the synthetic type of humanity. Sex will then no longer be a tyranny; it will be an ideal, and sexuality will be a sacrament.

I finished this volume of the German lady with feelings of emotion. She had given me what I had been looking for: a synthetic philosophy of the woman's movement, which unquestionably is going to be one of the great landmarks in civilisation. The synthetic ideal is not sympathetic to me personally; moreover, the real bar to woman's freedom is woman. Sex is and must be the greatest force in life, because life is entirely dependent upon it. Perhaps the most synthetic civilised community in the world is a bee-hive, but there the drone, or male, is an idler—he is not synthetic at all. For synthetic woman to chafe at beauty as the valuation of sex is unreasonable, also, I hold, unæsthetic. Love is blind, it may be, but it is only blind because of beauty. Without the *ideal* of beauty humanity would be little higher than the animals. We should go back, instead of forward, at any sex depreciation of beauty, which is the fountain spring of all art and creation. The appreciation of beauty is a gift, a cult, and thus differs from instinct. Nothing could be more fatal to

the true freedom of woman than sex atrophy of spiritualised beauty. Man needs joy, as he needs the sun. If the ideal of synthetic woman is a female unlovely in the eyes of man, however independent, however intellectual, however spiritual, she will not assuredly be man's ideal; and the moment she ceases to be that, why, whose ideal will she be?

A comrade, a helpmate, a fellow-worker. Yes, but not a lover! The inspiration of love is beauty. If in the synthetic state it will be thought degrading, servile, or silly in a woman to be beautiful, to be physically desirable, what incentive will there be to life? Probably that is what Rosa Mayreder has in mind when she warns woman that the ideal to be aimed at is an ideal of "*sexuality*." And it is because she realises this fundamental condition of nature that her book has a real philosophic and constructive value.

In the synthetic person, none the less, I seem to descry a lack of animalism, and consequently of vitality, which must lead to emasculacy. I love a great bouncing puppy. I love the vitality of man A race of pure reason—can it ever be a noble race? Have not all the heroic deeds, the great creative works in life been done by that nervous animal force we call vitality? Would a synthetic woman put out to sea in a storm, like Grace Darling? Would man, if he were never damned, be worth salvation? It is generally the vital men who are damned. And it is just this vitality that is so often higher than reason, as the heart is often higher than the mind.

As it is, probably most men would admit that the greatest thing in the world are babies; women coming next; the "so-called" domineering sex a poor third. We are conquering the air—the conquest of sex is still but a woman's theory, the theory of the synthetic ideal. Shall we win to it? I wonder. And do you know I am still wondering, because when the train steamed into Pontrefrac station it was a smoking ruin—burnt down by the Suffragettes, the porters told me—and, on a milkcan, Goldenlocks sat, looking the picture of maidenhood, and we exchanged I don't know how many kisses.

The Gentle Art of Faking Furniture

II

By Herbert Cescinsky

In the first article of this series some account of the methods of the furniture faker were given. A good deal depends, of course, on the conditions under which the piece is made: whether wholesale, at commercial prices, or retail for direct consumption. It is simply a matter of price and time involved. An oak piece ordered to-day for delivery some century or two later would not require to be faked at all; time would do all that was necessary, and the maker could confine his attention solely to questions of design and detail. The shorter the period in which the article is required, the more violent must be the methods.

There are many adjuncts to the wire brush, referred to in the previous article. Hob-nailed boots are useful, especially if of policeman size. Table legs, especially those of the massive, bulbous kind so general on Elizabethan banqueting tables, can be improved in antiquity by being dropped from the top of a tall factory on to a pavement below. Generally speaking, however, old oak beams have the necessary cracks ready made. I believe that wax polishing is now done by power-driven brushes in really up-to-date factories. This is a great improvement on the old hand process, producing a better result in a shorter time.

Ornamental iron work is a valuable adjunct to the good fake; it assists the Cæsar's wife business very materially, and offers no great difficulties. Salt and water will give the result of centuries in a few weeks. The forging—in the true blacksmith's sense of the word—must be good, for English ironwork, when done by hand, has never lost

its national character. Hinges and the like must be fixed with clout nails; it is embarrassing to discover a Nettlefold screw at an awkward moment on an Elizabethan piece. On fourteenth century livery cupboards thick leather should be substituted for iron hinges; this gives a much more genuine appearance.

It has been stated before that mahogany furniture is difficult to forge successfully, but this only applies to untouched examples. Allow a decent margin for "restorations," and the problem is much simplified. The lack of the raw material is a serious drawback, however, unless one is making for the American market, where the criticism is not so severe. The American Customs, however, are difficult; it is such a toss-up. If the authorities guess wrongly, the consignee has to pay duty, which, in implying that the piece is not genuine, is awkward both for dealer and purchaser. It is, of course, common knowledge that genuine antiques are admitted in America duty free, but the methods of examination is analogous to that of a bull examining a mathematical calculation. It may pass muster, or the mathematician submitting it may be gored or tossed. Generally speaking, however, if a well-known dealer be the sponsor the difficulties are much reduced, but the odds of duty being levied are about two to one whether the piece be genuine or otherwise; if, however, the consigner be of no great repute, then, to use the bookmaker's parlance, the prices shorten somewhat.

The lapse of a century or more produces certain irregularities and inexactitudes which are very different in their nature from mere crudities of workmanship. Side by side with the development of English furniture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we can trace the evolution of the tools of the joiner and the cabinet maker, with concomitant growing perfection of workmanship. Shrinkage and warping of the timber used, however slight the irregularities may be, materially affect the mechanical perfection of a piece. Furniture of the Tudor and Stuart periods was initially crude, due to tools of little or no precision and the lack of training of the workmen of the time. With the introduction of foreign artisans, chiefly of Dutch extraction, during the reigns of James II. and the Stadtholder William, a much higher standard of pro-

duction was inaugurated. Veneers were laid with the hot caul or the hammer, either plain or enriched with an intricate inlay of marqueterie. It is this furniture which is both costly and difficult to imitate. Modern perfection is as much in advance as the Tudor crudity is behind the standard of this period. There are many devices adopted by the faker to attain the result, the most usual being to take an original plain piece and re-veneer it with marqueterie. Making outright is seldom attempted, and never with complete success. The re-veneered plain walnut furniture is, however, difficult to detect if the imposition be cleverly done. One method is to lay the veneer in the usual way, and to wash off the protecting paper left by the marqueterie cutter. The cleaning up is then done with a small piece of pumice stone, the irregularities being purposely left. The marqueterie is then treated with nitric acid, which bleaches the walnut ground, and causes the marqueterie to rise in some places and sink in others. The result is a very good imitation of marqueterie of the period of William III.

The usual method with lacquered furniture is similar to that adopted in the case of marqueterie. A plain piece of undoubted antiquity is selected, and the lacquer applied. To obtain the cracked appearance of age, one of two means are chosen, either to prepare the ground with oil colour and to finish with shellac polish or varnish—in which case the slower drying under-coat, in the contraction of drying, causes the lacquer to crack—or to "craze" the whole surface with hot needles. The latter is the most artistic, but the most expensive. It is only adopted with the best work. Considerable ability is required in the imitation of the Oriental forms of English lacquer—which is the most prized—to still retain the national character. Usually the counterfeit invites detection by over-perfection of execution.

If it were desired to attempt a further classification, we might revolve antique furniture into the "fakeable" and the "non-fakeable"; in other words, those pieces which are profitable to imitate, and those which are impossible of duplication, actually or commercially. Among the latter may be classed the later seventeenth and the eighteenth century grandfather and bracket clocks. They

are frequently forged, but they should deceive no one with any culture, any more than a Bank of England note would if engraved on a sheet of letter paper. A long-case may be, and often is, married to a clock which does not originally belong to it, but if the two are of the same period very little mischief is done. The early square-dial clocks are expensive things to make by modern methods. The matting of a dial centre in the old-fashioned manner, by hand, with a fine punch, or the filing of the elaborate pierced hands of the same period, were only commercial possibilities when the artisan worked seventy hours a week for half a crown. I have often pictured, in imagination, the intelligent duplication of one of Tompion's or Quare's clocks in the original manner of these old makers; the cost would be prohibitive. Forgeries do abound, especially in country districts, but the purchaser must possess more faith* than judgment to be gulled by them. We are dealing here with one of the exact phases of collecting, where precise knowledge is everything, and mere opinion is not required. I know of no greater joy to the collector with a mechanical mind than in taking a fine late seventeenth century grandfather clock to pieces and examining each part carefully with a lens. One can intensify the pleasure by putting it together afterwards. The conscientious care in the dividing of each wheel, the tempering of each arbor and pinion, and the pride taken with each apparently insignificant detail are truly amazing in these days of wholesale machine production. A collection of clocks, such as that of Mr. D. A. F. Wetherfield, is a veritable triumph, and a testimonial to the knowledge of its owner. Here, at least, one can know, and be independent of the "expert" who has opinions—and has pawned his knowledge, if he ever possessed any.

Of all our national handicrafts, that of the furniture maker with his brother craftsmen, the clockmaker, the weaver of fabrics, the marqueterie cutter, the glass-blower, and the brass finisher, is the most evanescent and the most worthy of preservation. Painting and literature, permanent arts as distinguished from those of music—other than from the written score—have their professors, and

* "Faith," said the schoolboy, "is the capacity for believing that which we know to be untrue."

their chairs. Will a future generation witness professors of national handicrafts, of antique furniture, and the like? Machine production has done much to destroy the pride of the workman in his work. It is so difficult to enthuse over the making of dovetails only, year after year. The art of the borer of wormholes is capable of little expansion, and the making of a thousand of the one article is depressing from sheer monotony.

One credit is due to the faker. He has struck a blow, all unwittingly, against the wholesale power duplication of the one model, *ad nauseam*. His work must vary, to be believed, and that his efforts have been appreciated is shown by the growth of the antique trade. An artist, like Thomas Gray's rose, "born to blush unseen,"—for if he blushed in public he would be found out—he has done good by stealth. He has improved the status of the trade and of the public. The taste for reproductions is later than that for the collecting of antiques; born of the superior cult, as it were. Golder's Green has followed in the footsteps of Park Lane, even as Mary, the housemaid, copies her mistress's sables with the skin of the useful rabbit. There is always a measure of good in things evil as well as of evil in things good. Glory and honour to the faker, therefore! He has, as a general rule, profited but little; his customers have not been gulled. They have profited by his skill to make their fortunes, and if you have been taken in, blame the dealer rather than the faker. Your deception is merely a testimonial to the skill of the latter; if you knew more he would have to improve. Get on, or get out! that is his maxim. He can claim no vast profit for himself; he must work at commercial rates, after all. He has the added mortification of frequently seeing his pieces fiercely competed for, at fabulous figures, at well-known public auctions. There is very little pleasure in deception, if the fruits are gathered by others. Bear in mind, also, the actual faker does not deceive; his cards are known before he plays. He is merely catering for a demand; one might as well blame a man who made chairs with nine legs because the public required them. If the fool crop be perennial, his are not the first fruits; he is lucky if he gets the husks.

One question arises from the foregoing. If the game

of collector *versus* faker be such a keen one, how do our national collections escape? The answer is short and sharp; they don't. They are infinitely cautious, and in no hurry to buy, and that is partial salvation. In a multitude of counsellors there is often wisdom, and no genuine piece is the worse for the continued scrutiny of many eyes. The official methods—or procrastination—of the Board of Education are fatal to the acquisition of bargains, but they make for safety as far as fakes are concerned. The quick-buying collecting public is a much happier hunting ground for the forger of antiques. Yet, with all their caution, museum officials are taken in, as witness the "Bode-Lucas" bust and the tiara of Satapharnes. There is one class of antique which is fatal to the expert—the historical piece which has been altered or "improved" by a noble owner, probably quite innocent of the fact that the integrity of the article was being destroyed thereby. The Sizergh Castle bedstead in the Victoria and Albert Museum is an instance of this. Originally a walnut bed, there is now nothing genuine remaining but the two posts; the rest has been made up with oak. As a genuine piece it would deceive no one if offered for sale to a collector in a dealer's shop, yet the provenance of Sizergh Castle was sufficient for it to be purchased for the nation.* The museum being established, *inter alia*, for national education, such pieces as this bedstead, and others which could be instanced, should be removed forthwith, whether bought for, or presented to, the nation.

The references, during the whole of the foregoing remarks, have been to fakes of high quality, those which really tax the knowledge of the expert in the highest degree. From these we get a gradual descending scale until we reach examples where the ability—or impudence—lies only in the selling. It is truly surprising what some people will accept as "antiques" on the bare word of a dealer. Pieces of a character and purpose utterly unknown at the date to which they are referred, are sold every day. Queen Anne sideboards or china cabinets, Chippendale dressing-tables or washstands, these are a few of the so-called antiques which are passed off as genuine on the

* There are old engravings still in existence which show this bedstead in its original state.

gullible collecting public. It is a peculiarity of furniture collecting that the person who would doubt his skill to select a diamond, a fabric, or a motor-car, or even a joint of beef without expert advice, will buy antique furniture recklessly, on his own unaided knowledge—or the absence of it—without any guarantee beyond the description of a dealer who, he must know, is an interested—and usually an ignorant—party. Dealers frequently do not know even the meaning of the terms they use; they are ignorant of periods, proportions, or design, and sometimes cannot even pronounce the names they use in their "shop patter." I have heard one well-known expert refer to an "Elizabethean" court cupboard.

The question of provenance is the real difficulty in the disposal of the forged antique. Where did the article come from, from whom was it purchased, what was the amount paid for it, how much, if at all, has it been restored? These are awkward questions to answer when the piece has been deliberately ordered to a preconceived design from a notorious faking factory. There is so much to remember, as, although any fool can tell the truth, it takes a genius with phenomenal memory to make a good liar. In a big firm there are many people who have to learn the same lesson, as the client on his second visit may be attended to by another salesman. Thus, in a recent transaction which came under my notice, one member of a firm stated that a piece came from Wales. At the second visit another assistant changed its origin from Wales to the Midlands. The principal gallantly tried to fill the breach by giving the location as Worcester, which, in a way, bridges Wales and the Midlands. What a pity it is that a faked piece cannot come from several places at once. In this instance the firm took the piece back and refunded, not without considerable slinging of mud and after much pressure. This is the penalty of faulty drilling of the rank and file. Even when the historical statements are unanimous, however, there is still the evidence of books of account, which have to be divulged in an appeal to the law. Hence this end is rarely reached; it is better to disgorge in the one case than have a host of supplementary ones crop up as the result of the advertisement of an action at law. It is awkward in these matters to be like

Lord Byron, who awoke one morning to find himself famous.

It would appear, from the foregoing remarks, that the collecting of furniture is a hopeless business, but this is not the case. One can neither buy nor sell with success in any trade without experience; why should furniture be exempted? The trade has infinitely wider ramifications than almost any other. The expert must have a profound knowledge of woods in all their kinds and varieties, a keen eye for design, an acquaintance with the patterns, ornamental motives, and methods of the various periods. A workshop training is of the utmost value, and an acquaintance, at first hand, with the methods of the faker, indispensable. Knowledge of this kind must not be allowed to rust; it must be continually reinforced by practice, and study of genuine examples in all conditions. The mansions of England and the national museums are open for public inspection, although the latter are not quite free from reproach, and have to be taken *cum grano salis* in many instances. With furniture of undoubted repute, as, for example, at Hardwick, Penshurst, Knole, Nostell Priory, Harewood House, Osterley Park, and a host of other palatial homes, the collector is quite safe. He will find that the labour and close study necessary is more than repaid. There is no real pleasure in collecting without knowledge; one may score one success on the principle that even a blind sow sometimes finds an acorn, but at the expense of a heap of costly blunders. The true collector does not pursue his hobby for pecuniary profit, but that is no reason why knowledge of his subject should be ignored. The joy of possession, and appreciation, far outweighs that of any monetary gain, and this pleasure only the genuine examples can give. The instinctive love of sport, of a bargain, is ruined by the discovery that the material is not "all wool and a yard wide." The game is a keen one—collector *versus* faker. Do not undervalue your opponents. The needy billiard sharp is one to be feared; he must be a good player, beyond the average, or he would be extinguished by the first amateur who comes along. As Mark Twain observed: "Beware of the man who carries the chalk in his pocket, and calls the marker Jim." Be wary of the faker, and exceedingly watchful;

you are not compelled to collect by dire necessity; he must sell his wares, and at the highest possible price. There lies your advantage over him. Do not expect too much; there may be other people in the world your equal in smartness. Above all, don't disdain to learn. The lowest mechanic in the furniture trade may read you a lesson on many points. To form a collection of furniture only—to say nothing of the hundred and one other articles which go to make a home beautiful—you must study not one trade, but several. One quality yet remains, which is denied to others than the born collector—the instinct for the beautiful, the eye for what is "fytte and fyne," which unaided by long experience is of little value, but reinforced by continual observation is even as the faith which will move mountains.

"Be Hard, My Friends"

(NIETZSCHE)

By the Editor

WHEN Frederick the Great cashiered and sent young Blücher "to the Devil" for protesting against the promotion of a nobleman over him, he showed himself to be a poor judge of men, but a firm commander. Fritz was not thinking of the unit, he was thinking of the Army: it was a question of policy. He deliberately filled the Army with officers of noble birth, because the standard of the nobility was honour; a noble who flinched at a crisis could never subsequently find refuge in his own class—he would be an outcast; whereas men of lower birth always could. Blücher was a commoner, Fritz needed nobles. *Noblesse oblige!* The man was sacrificed for the cause.

It is true that ultimately Frederick failed, but that was not his fault. The impetus which he gave to freedom and the rejection of old-world traditions was not grasped by the Philistine Germans until Bismarck placed the issue with France before them. On the other hand, it did no harm to Blücher, who, at the age of ninety, led the Prussians home at Waterloo. Judgments and decisions may be wrong, they are rarely irreparable, and very often they are right. The thing is to take decisions, to know, that is, what one wants—the only really fatal thing being indecision. History teems with examples. We have Nelson fixing the spy-glass to his blind eye. Everywhere, every day it is the hard and prompt decision that carries on the business of mankind, the will of self-assertion. A Christian, said Luther, "is the most proud lord of all and subject to no one; the most dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone." In a word, he is an ego. It is not easy to be hard by any means, or there would be little mediocrity and no subjection. Sternness—which does not mean to be cruel or evil or unkind

—is essentially the quality of justice, which, again, is the philosophic interpretation of mercy. For a mercy which is all-forgiving and unmindful shuts out all reason of thought by which alone we are differentiated from the animals. Our sins are visited upon our children, the question therefore is to be. But a man cannot be unless he has the will. Without volition, the individual is only so much jetsam. He is of no mental account. At best he can only be a server.

You can annihilate or dismantle a Fleet; you cannot turn a fool into a wise man, though wise men can be foolish enough: that is the difficulty of life. Our bodies are nothing, our minds are all, and the trouble is that the higher the intelligence of man grows, the deeper his philosophy, the wider his sympathy, the more problematic ourselves and the things that are seem to become. Only a few decades ago civilisation appeared to our fathers as a well-defined and settled idea, embracing certain accepted truths and principles which to-day the very sciolist among us would reject. The immortality of the soul, the divinity of the Book, the justice of war, the inviolability of kings, the sacrosanctity of the Law, the permanency of class and privilege, the inevitability of the existing order of society—these things were the creed of the country. To question them was to incur the stigma of blasphemy. The mental outlook was rigid and inexorable; we travelled slowly along the road in shay or coach, and, from all accounts, it was a jolly time enough. There was leisure up and down. The Squirearchy battened on the land. We English accepted. To doubt was a weakness. The big houses had their family ghosts, the poor had their beer: between them stood the law, tradition, superstition, the legacy of Feudal custom.

It was Germany who disturbed our national equilibrium, first by the military swiftness of her victory and national consolidation, and secondly by her stimulus and contribution to thought. The Germans sent us back to the study of Shakespeare. Very reluctantly we got to hear of their philosophies, their historians, of the methods of their criticism and inquiry, of what they were saying about God and Jerusalem, science and the cosmoramic truths, beliefs

and observances, so that at last even we had to set about translating them. We hated them, as the British bumpkin hates theory, and the gentleman hates originality. We thought these people "indecent." To a man like Newman, they were the cowboys of culture. And we are still fighting this foreign intrusion, for if at last we have come to accept Wagner, we still regard Nietzsche as an "immoral" man, just as idealist political opinion in England still affects to disregard the lesson of Bismarck, though it is the reason of all modern statesmanship. Not until the Kaiser's Navy was a rising and fighting reality did Englishmen hear of Mommsen or Treitschke, or Schopenhauer or List, who was the founder of modern German statecraft, or of any of the economic Pan-German professors until Mr. Chamberlain popularised political economy, characteristically enough, as a diversion in party politics. But the "idea of satiety," as the Germans call it, is no more. The Germans taught Europe to want and to ask. Our splendid British Bumble, who stood at the portal of Victorian thought and progress, has shrunk to the insignificance of the modern horse. Oliver has been vindicated. We Englishmen, too, want and ask to-day. And we want more than a beadle's treacle.

There is something of the Chinaman in the national psychology, and just as self-depreciation is the habit of the Chinese gentleman, so we generally imagine that we are "going to the dogs." Perhaps we are moving a bit rapidly for our institutions, as might be expected in an era of Celtic inspiration, but otherwise things seem astonishingly healthy. Privilege has gone, and in its place we have got opinion. The menace of Germany has once more turned our attention to the map and mind of Europe—a condition which has always proved beneficial to the native genius. We were greatest in the days of Agincourt and the Armada, of Cromwell and Napoleon; we have become again internationally vital since the crisis of the Boer War. Slowly foreign ideas are percolating through the mists of insularity. New standards have come into the Island, new ideas, new truths. Karl Marx has come, the Russian Ballet has come, Lloyd George has cone, Mrs. Pankhurst has come; we have a few airships and a few Territorials, we are even becoming slowly

aware that we have a great writer on the sea in Joseph Conrad.

But every epoch has its crises, and so in this period of flux and discovery, this new sublimated democracy of ours, perhaps the weakness of civilisation is civilisation. The keeps and fastnesses of Victorian usage have fallen. Where once we saluted in silence is now a market-place. In the fermentation of change and rudiment, manifestation has preceded our philosophy. The freshness of it all, our delight in the new freedom, our human exhilaration at the discomfiture of so many of the old forces—we may be somewhat unduly elated. We are a literate people to-day—and books as common as potatoes. We find we can all talk. Nearly all the mysteries have been revealed; there is no longer any dread or much reverence. Bully for Robinson, no doubt. But knowledge is a dangerous thing, both too little and too much of it. The man with a little wisdom talks pimples; the sage is apt to become a cynic.

Between Tappertit and the wise man of the Mountain there is the hiatus of confusion. As under the feudal system the lord was on very agreeable terms with his serf, as in the realms of thought insanity is often perilously akin to genius, so the State, which stands for the masses, is necessarily shaken and rocked when its extremities are in sympathetic antagonisms. The hardness of initiative and direction weakens. Fissures appear in the integument. Doubt creeps in with its dystrophic effects upon the pulse and action of the whole. There is a weakness, which in the case of our higher civilisation may roughly be described as blather.

It is the disease of the new age, a kind of mental and moral snuffles.

We blather about art and culture, books and plays, pictures and the intellectuals, music and the latest sensation, just as we are blathering now about aeroplanes in lieu of a national scientific design. Criticism has grown so kind that we are all reviewers of books nowadays, except when we want to larrap into the work of a friend—which

we do under the cover of anonymity. Take, for example, what is called the Marconi affair. A Minister who has earned, not inherited, his money, invests £20,000 in the American Marconi Company, and puts two other members of the Cabinet in the speculation. The American Company is not connected with the English Company. No man has ever yet pretended that a Minister is not to invest. Subjected to an examination of a rigour unprecedented since the trial of Warren Hastings, the three Ministers have emerged unsullied and unscathed, the only aspersion any sensible man can cast upon them being that of Party indiscretion. Yet for months the blather has persisted. For weeks the Commission has been sitting, whereas the essential issue in the whole teapot nastiness is the importance to England of a wireless telegraphy system.

The national side of the question completely ignored, though the *Titanic* was lost solely because of this neglect of a great scientific discovery, as if the only thing that mattered in the national life was talk, this blather about Ministerial investments. Is it not rather like the Turkish clatter about the impregnable lines of Adrianople's fortifications? Is it not of far greater importance to England to possess the best wireless telegraphy system available? The thing is merely a Party machination with the object of drawing individualist Liberalism into the snare. Nothing more. Blather—of no more moment to the nation than is the commercialism of the Futurists to art, or the Rag-Time jollity to music.

It is the weakness of our higher civilisation. Instead of coming to the fundamentals, we are engrossed in the superficialities of the sensation, in what may be called newsification. Mr. Lloyd George has shown himself to be rather a "mug" in the City—that is all. Mr. Rufus Isaacs has been indiscreet. Just foolery, as *John Bull* pointed out. Every day the commercial fleets of the world realise afresh the stupendous power of wireless telegraphy—the thing that really matters to Great Britain. Another Party political *potin*, which, under the leadership of Mr. Balfour, would probably never have been permitted.

The other day we all went news-mad because a curate ran off with a lady who was not his wife, and chose to do so as secretly as possible. A bad curate, a bad man—that is the only sensible commentary. But the fellow was hunted down by wireless telegraphy even into Australia, as if he were a second Crippen. As a fact, it is a good thing for the Church that such a man has left it. He was obviously unfitted for the task. At grips with life out there, he will probably turn out an excellent chap and a useful member of society, and the Church will be rid of an undesirable. Here, again, we see the power of blather about an entirely insignificant event—the power, that is, of disproportion, artificiality, and sensationalism.

Signs these of weakness. Here is another side of the question put before me by a man who has spent the last four years in South Africa, travelling up and down the country. He was talking about the new type of Englishmen who go out, say, to Rhodesia, men from the 'Varsities, the best, he said, we sent. They start out there for a shoot on Sunday afternoons, as here we stroll along with the perambulator by the Serpentine or on Streatham Common. And sauntering down the road, one Sunday, one of these fresh arrivals came suddenly upon a male lion only fifty yards away. They looked at one another for a moment, and the lion, not being hungry, ambled off into the grass. Not a shot. No, the man walked back into camp with his rifle and calmly told the story.

"Shoot!" retorted the fresher, when questioned about it, "it never occurred to me." My friend, who was once on the stage, became dramatic. In four years, he said, he had never had such a chance. A male lion, single-handed, and not shoot! He couldn't understand it. "And he's a decent fellow, too," he exclaimed, "he's the best bridge-player in the district."

The professionalism of Party blather has become so pronounced that English public life is rapidly becoming the playground of personal recrimination and the kaleidoscopic artificialities of scenic oratory. In France only the temperament of the *Midi* can compete with the

blather necessary for Parliamentary success, and we are doing our best to ape it. Every thinking Englishman in the Empire will agree that the condition of Ireland presents a problem of national urgency, but because a Liberal, and not a Tory, Government honestly tries to find a solution, we have the blather of internecine war coupled with the cry of treason to the cause of Protestantism. As a fact, it is admitted that Irish Home Rule would sound the knell of Catholic power in the island, as is evident from the objection of the priests there to it. Let Ireland grow up, and at once the local ignorance maintained by Catholicism would be broken up. It is time. And when Ireland does get Home Rule, we shall all wonder what we were talking about.

Moral blather has always been a mania with us, and is actually a public profession. It is because of the moral blather of Puritanical Liberalism that so many good men, who would otherwise be good Liberals, are at the poll so often bad Conservatives. The cant and humbug of the thing revolt them. That is why in a mud-slinging business such as this of Marconi, opinion is so ready to see only the moral side of the matter, to smile at the discomfiture of smugness. It is not given to man every day to duck Mr. Stiggins in a horse-trough. And the opportunity is the bane of Liberalism. The private life of a Liberal, this is reckoned fair game by a public pulpit-driven by hypocrisy, for it is an expression which, too, is Liberal. On the day of exposure, the morality-monger has no friends. "Hit him hard, Bill," resounds from every throat. And there is no retaliation. A Liberal press which enquired into the private conduct of the Tory aristocracy would find no jurymen to condemn. The element of sport comes in. It is sufficient. Where there is no pretence, there is no offence. But to hang a hangman is cricket.

It is well; testifying to the fibre of public sanity. "Live dangerously," Nietzsche wrote. How far finer than to live smugly! Better shoot at a lion, miss him, and get mangled to death, than merely stare at a lion, walk home, and win a fiver at bridge. Even a drunkard is preferable to a sluggard, for the former, at any rate, has

a vice, whereas the latter has neither vice nor virtue. To be evil, a man must have a stout heart and a good stomach. It is as hard to be really evil as it is to be really good. The mental dyspepsia of modern civilisation is a weakness in the State, promoting the culture of insincerity, which is largely the reason why feminine militancy has succeeded in pushing its claims into the forefront of practical politics, because in the wilderness of blather about us these women are determined and are sincere.

In many ways China is an example of the higher State, where a civilisation, which is as old as oranges and lemons, has grown up in the calm of the contemplative life. Until quite recently China had neither army nor patriotism. A soldier was a mere hireling, the flag had no national meaning at all. The philosopher stands as high there to-day as Cabinet Ministers stand with us. It was the abode of philosophy, examinations, sophistries, knowledge and poetics, Pundit wisdom and contemplation, the country of art for art's sake, and life for life's sake, where the local *Candide* cultivated his land, and in the deliration of opium dreams men won to the Nirvana of ecstasy. No national questions ever troubled the surface of Chinese opinion. So wise are the Chinese that it is a virtue to die, and the best way to punish an enemy is to commit suicide on his doorstep. They have the most flowery literature in the world, also the best manners. No European civilisation has ever remotely approached the Chinese in the philosophic and recondite attainments. A little chippy-choppy, now and then, otherwise the serenity of the happy wisdom, an Empire of the polite amenities.

And now after all these centuries their pigtails are coming off; they are going back, reverting to the methods of barbarism of Western civilisation, whereas we are inclining to theirs. The phenomenon is of some national interest. As our public life takes on the higher Mandarin spirit of the East, the Chinese are taking to pipeclay. There would seem matter for meditation here. The fresher who refused a shot at a lion acted like a philosophic Chinaman—the Chinaman who shoulders his rifle and cuts off his pigtail signs on to Hohenzollern militarism. The farther

civilisation recedes from instinct, the more philosophic and humanitarian it grows, the less will become its strength and the reason of activity. As boiling water evaporates into steam, so a civilisation may evaporate into the torpor of abstract rumination. We would seem to be put on earth for the redemption chiefly of our fallacies. When man has conquered them, when he has no longer any idols, creeds, beliefs, superstitions, mysteries, illusions, or summits to overcome, well may one ask what can he do with the philosopher's stone in his palm, but throw it back into the sea, like the Chinese are doing after four thousand years of apathy? The vanishing point is but the beginning of a new point. But as the only thing final in life is its vanishment, so the only thing positive is activity. Like Robinson Crusoe, we have to go out in search of our food and necessaries, to act, to do something, or our members would atrophy, and our minds would perish of inanition. Fortunately, the perfect wisdom has never yet been found in this world, and it is never likely to be. Always there is a higher pinnacle. Always there is a beckoning beyond.

Like Harlequin's tights, blather is a fascinating superficiality; we are apt to forget there is a man inside them. We are all pursuing comfort and well-being. Civilisation is occupied in eliminating danger, shock, violence, surprise, the unexpected, from mankind, because in the great Moloch of Capital, routine smoothness of running is essential to its machinery. The State care of individual life, balanced by its indifference to the conditions of life, is not a glorious idea. As it gathers man collectively into the system, its effects must be to sap his vitality, to use him rather than lead him to use himself. A civilisation which grows too orderly or refined must necessarily also grow flaccid, prone rather to show and loquacity than to deed and achievement. On the one hand, it makes things so easy; on the other, it crushes us into slavery. Opportunism, which is the motto of the age, is not the mother of opportunity, which comes, like love and adventure, only to those who seek it. It is so much safer to meet a lion and not shoot, than to shoot and risk the consequences.

But nothing was ever won without risk, and it is perhaps

symptomatic of Young England that it is the classes who have become the cynics, whereas the masses are the enthusiasts. It is well to remember that sometimes in the midst of our daily blather, which is apt to deflect our purposes. If cruelty is the greatest crime of man, weakness is not less an evil punished with protean visitations. To be merely wise is not sufficient, any more than it is to be merely good. To inspire—which is to lead; to *do* good, a people, or an individual, must also be strong. But to be strong it is necessary to be hard—to oneself first and always.

ED. NOTE—The second instalment of Mr. Arnold Bennett's Series "The Storyteller's Craft" will appear next month.

Play of the Month

The Yellow Jacket

In all the world there is no sight so foolish as a dead body, which is none the less a very real thing, and the reason, no doubt, is that with death the illusion of what was, passes, only vitality having the smallest significance or reality. A carcase is utterly without poetry. The mind closes upon it in sheer blankness. Into the earth with the thing! *Finis.* A man whistles and passes on.

Stageland, of course, is entirely dependent upon illusion —that is to say, we know that it is all make-believe; that when the villain is killed in the last act he goes out afterwards to supper, probably to dance the Turkey Trot at the Cabaret, as that the heroine, whom we left on the manly chest of the hero, will probably drive home with some man who is not a hero; in a word, our evening's enjoyment depends upon the quality or intensity of the impression conveyed, which again is dependent upon its vitality. Methods differ. We who are unimaginative believe in imitation life and nature—hence our stock scenery, our stage properties, spectacles like *Drake* and the autumn "realisms" at Drury Lane, and the public's abhorrence of being enjoined to utilise what perception imagination or intellect it may possess, in a playhouse.

The Yellow Jacket, the Chinese play at the Duke of York's, shows us the Eastern view, which takes us back to our own childish charade days, to the make-believe of make-believe which, too, was very much the condition of the Shakespearean theatre. Just as a child says, "Now let's play Red Indians," and is able instantaneously to plunge itself into the atmosphere, emotion, and realism of the game, regardless of locality but strictly conscious always that it is a game, so in this Chinese play the visible is philosophically invisible; we are told what to see and what not

to see; reality is shown to be unreality—and yet this unreality is the very life of the performance; in short, the vision of our childhood returns: the play is absolutely the thing.

All the time, precisely as in the mind's eye of a child, movement is illusionary. Externals being eliminated from the scene, the art is to conceal the art; thus Chorus, the man who wrote and produced the play and instructed the actors, is invisible; he only tells us from time to time of a change of scene or action, visible only when entertaining the audience before the curtain between the acts in the self-depreciatory, mock-urbane manner characteristic of the race, his position being that of, say, the drawing-room chair which we used to put on the table to figure as the ogre's castle. Then there is the Property Man, always visible and yet invisible, who helps the thing through, on the stage all the time, completely bored with the whole proceedings—out of the picture, of course, and yet dramatically and even terribly vital to the illusion.

It is the technique of contrast, the contact of the real with the unreal, exactly as life is. This fellow going through the night's work in the tired, mechanical way of routine indifference, to whom the whole business means only what money he can get out of it, takes the place in effect of the Greek Chorus; he is the mirror, the other soul. All the while he throws down the illusion of the play and the players—dusting the actors' boots at irrelevant moments, snatching things out of their hands, irritating, ignoring them, reading the newspapers and what not, and yet he enhances that illusion because by the affirmation of his own reality he relieves and punctuates theirs. Instead of seeming foolish, out of place, obstructive, this curious figure becomes essential and constructive. The very objectionableness of the man heightens the contrast. He is our other self, paradox, the *journalier*, dreary life of toiling mankind, always present with us, even after dinner in our evening clothes. And thus unexpectedly, unconsciously, he is the literary expression of the Play and House, himself more tragic than the tragedy, comic because of his reality. His gloom is the exact counterfeit to our attitude. He, the one real thing, becomes the illusion, while the stage becomes a reality.

In the theatre he is a new dramatic power, rising to the sublimity of Æschylean tragedy. This duality of the visible with the invisible—a dramatic effect that Strindberg aimed at in his mystic plays—is singularly successful by this Chinese method; at times it is positively terrific. The hero, for example, dies in a snowstorm—the snow being indicated by little pieces of paper shaken about the stage by the Property Man through a sieve. A white shroud is thrown over the body, but there are a few pieces of paper left. The Property Man stops, taps the bottom of the sieve, and with superb nonchalance tips the remainder on to the corpse.

On the stage the effect of this action, supposed to be invisible, is catastrophic. The vanity of death, the splendid youth of life—here it all is! No words could express so dramatically the philosophy of our being in this world, the polarity of life and death. Here, in a manner impossible on the Western stage, we have at once the illusion of illusion and disillusion, the expression and commentary of tragedy and comedy in a double appeal to the imagination. Instantaneous, irrevocable, it is a moment of overpowering drama.

Again, take the scene in the "boat of love," where we are bidden to imagine the lovers floating down a Chinese river at moonlight among the rushes and the great flowers. As a fact, the actors recline on a couch, two men behind them making rhythmical movements with long fans accompanied by a swishing sound representative of flowing water. We should have had real water, a real boat, elaborate mechanical devices, rushes and Covent Garden chrysanthemums, and a whole paraphernalia of painted scenery—and probably all the while we should have been hoping the machinery would not go wrong. At this Chinese play, how simple! Yet strange; at the first words of love we seem to be transported into China, reeling with the lovers in a dream of ecstasy. Illusion. Our imagination soars. A little is so often better than much. It was the sound of an ocarina that gave Wagner the music of Tristam —so here this Chinese Romeo and Juliet scene is a thing of beauty; we are in the realms of love—"if there were only lips for all our kisses!"

The Yellow Jacket is a most interesting and stimulating

performance, quite beautiful as a spectacle, a satire written with poetic distinction, which enables us to laugh as much as we please. It is difficult to believe that its production here can be without important influence on the drama. If only as a lesson in presentation, it teaches how infinitely behind the East we are in the mechanism of stage optics, how far more subtle, poignant, and emotional is the Oriental method of appealing to the imagination through the imagination, what curious and transcendental effects are obtainable through the poetic medium of suggestion. It teaches us, too, how entirely unnecessary stage vulgarity is, how exquisitely droll humanity can be on the stage faithfully and naturally portrayed. Then it has produced a cast of unknown English players who are a revelation, while Ross as Chorus, and Holman Clarke as the Property Man, are creations.

Is it possible that in this visible though invisible figure we have the key to that unlocking of the higher soul that has been the problem of the intellectual drama? Why not? No Western play has carried the use of antithesis as far as this fellow does, and his power is simply that of suggestion. Were he to speak the whole pitch would be destroyed, and he would become as ineffective as Shakespeare's ghosts. He is the mind's eye, not the critic, working objectively and subjectively, like that of the spectator. There would seem great possibilities in such a person. Put him on the stage with Hamlet, and we should no longer have any doubts as to the manner of Hamlet's madness. By a touch, this common-sense man (out of the play) would reveal him to us. He stands for proportion. That is his job. He drags us to earth, but by so doing he indicates the infinities above. S. O.

Books of the Month

BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

A Modern History of the English People, 1880–1898. By R. H. Gretton. Grant Richards. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Gretton has set out to devise a new way of writing history; and it seems to us that he has set out to devise it with a very serious misunderstanding in his mind. He wishes to catch the actual mind of the people at a certain time. That, admittedly, is the very desirable thing to do in the writing of history. And it is equally clear that some or other Act in Parliament, some or other statesmanlike move in foreign affairs, or even some or other victory won in the nation's name but without the remotest kind of benefit to its people—that all these, and other noteworthy public events, may have no earthly reference to the actual mind of the people. That is true enough. But it does not mean that the comic songs sung by errand boys, or the current society scandal, any better reflect that mind. They are both parts of journalism, and the tendency of journalism to dominate more permanent things is one of the unhealthiest signs in modern writing. No one who has had anything to do with the construction of a daily paper can ever hold the cynical faith that journalistic files constitute national history; and Mr Gretton's book may be called a careful and orderly *précis* of the journalistic files for the score of years he includes, couched in a chastened form of their style. To claim for that conception the virtue of modernity is neither here nor there: it is only an evasion. Nevertheless, though we earnestly deny that Mr. Gretton's record is necessarily a history, modern or otherwise, of the English people between the years 1880–1898, we would very gladly and heartily bear testimony to its value as a journalistic digest of those years. As such it shows considerable skill in its inclusions and exclusions. The disjointed facility of its style helps it as such a digest. It is a rapid and orderly *résumé* in a convenient space.

General Booth. By George S. Railton (His First Commissioner). Hodder and Stoughton.

"The last great Evangelist of a creed militant claiming to be in the confidence of a Deity as to a future existence." It is possible that so some future compiler of "Who's Who of the Past," after reading this book, may define "The General." His contemporaries—be they as congenitally indifferent to this emotional specialist's particular belief in salvation as they are intellectually incapable of assuming that humility which conceives itself of sufficient importance to be perpetuated indefinitely as a thing above, superior to, all known or probable mutation—will find, in this record of his life, more than mere data for their own deductions. There is much in it to interest every student of humanity—apart from ratiocination or economics. The vast elaboration of charitable effort which has grown from the Nottingham apprentice-lad's youthful impulse is delineated by his First Commissioner with due regard to its fundamental simplicity—the Spirit of the Army. Those who have listened at an "Open Air" will have seen the spirit working in the flesh. Few will doubt its general sincerity. Such sentences as this will suffice to depreciate it in the eyes of that other and larger-growing army: "There is not a mill-owner in the place who does not want to get Salvationist workpeople,

even to the boys of our soldiers, because they know they can depend on them." For of Christ-cum-Capitalism the working man is growing tired. Nevertheless, he will recognise from a perusal that, in a generation much given to a great enthusiasm for football, there are others—others whose objective is inspired also by a sight of goals round which there strives a possibly "larger" humanity than finds expression, say, in "The Final" behind the big glasshouse at Sydenham.

HARRIET HOSMER: LETTERS AND MEMOIRS. Edited by CORNELIA CARR. New York: Moffat Yard and Co. 1912.

MISS HARRIET HOSMER, who was born in Massachusetts in 1830 and died in 1908, must have been a woman of considerable courage and energy, with keen interests and a buoyant nature and a real enthusiasm for the art of sculpture, to which she devoted herself. It is therefore a pity that this book, which is written by an intimate friend and sincere admirer of Miss Hosmer, should fail to make the reader realise her humour and vitality. Moreover, her work, which was not of the first rank, was produced under the influence of an artistic tradition already superseded for the most significant artists and critics. Miss Hosmer had a large and varied circle of friends, and was specially attached to England and Italy; the influence of France hardly counted at all in her life work. She seems to have been free from petty self-advertisement; the impression given by the book is one of entire artistic rectitude and dignity, though not of the divine spark. The book is profusely, but not very happily, illustrated with photographs of her work.

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PATRIOTISM. By ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD. Lane. Two vols.

"Patriotism," says Mr. Wingfield-Stratford, "is but the highest form of love for a created person, and he that would be a patriot must thus think of his country." He does not come very much nearer than this to a definition of patriotism; but he makes it clear that he identifies it with religious feeling on the one side, and on the other a developed race-consciousness which consists of identity between past and present, and between the part and the whole. "In early times the problem was how to weld a number of personal and sectional loyalties into an English patriotism, in the most restricted sense. Since that period England has grown into Great Britain, and Great Britain into the British Empire." The author has not made it quite clear how far he proposes to treat the development of patriotism as a conscious feeling, and how far he is showing its historical results. As a matter of fact, he takes the opportunity to discuss anything in history that strikes his fancy. He sums up the Middle Ages for us, and shows how feudalism, depending on a *personal* bond, is opposed to the communal feeling of patriotism; and he sums up the concluding phases of the Middle Ages, the days of "England's eclipse." The early Tudor years are years of preparation which burst forth in the splendour of Elizabeth's reign, and a whole chapter is devoted to Shakespeare, whose works "are the quintessence of Elizabethan patriotism." A great part of the book is devoted to a discussion of English authors—Milton, Burke, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Macaulay, &c.—but their views, their sayings about society and country, are considered so little in relation to the author's central purposes that his literary chapters do not contribute much to his argument. He is naturally captivated by the obvious patriotism of Disraeli, the Young England movement—Disraeli talked patriotism; therefore to this author he was a patriot. Shelley did not always talk in terms of patriotism, so he does not satisfy Mr. Stratford. "Imperium et Libertas" is the noble ideal which he holds up as his flag. But the patriotism with which he is concerned is too vague and rhetorical an affair to be wholly winning; his history also is too flamboyant and verbose to be very informative. Nevertheless, it is a bold and generous work—there are indeed 1,200

pages of it—and much labour has gone to the making of it. We finish the book with a gratified sense that Mr. Wingfield-Stratford, though dissatisfied with the present, is hopeful of the future.

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

GEOFFREY CHAUCER. By EMILE LEGOUIS, Professor of English Literature in the University of Paris. Translated by A. L. Lailaboix. Dent. 5s. net.

Since the same author's "Early Life of Wordsworth," there have been few books as good as M. Emile Legouis' study of Chaucer. It is a masterpiece of learning, good sense, and good taste, in combination, and makes one regret that the power of the pen is ever given to those who lack the combination. In two hundred pages M. Legouis had no space for dull display if he wished to do anything more. Consequently he has done without it. What might have been used for that purpose is now subsumed, out of sight, and merely gives depth to the graceful narrative, description, and criticism of the two hundred pages. Sometimes, of course, it cannot be denied that his grace is sleight of hand, and covers, not learning, but ordinary "pure ignorance," as when, for example, he tries to show that after all "The Canterbury Tales" were not an astonishing achievement for the author of the "Parlement of Foules" and "Legend of Good Women." It is only not astonishing to those who think of Chaucer simply as the ripe Canterbury Pilgrim. What M. Legouis insinuates is very probable—that the Tales were not the product of one short period, that they were made what they are by the happy thought of combining them; and assuming that some or many of the stories had long been written, it was a stroke of genius, suited to the poet's nature, with its changing and unstable humour, thus to elaborate this composite work, where he could reveal himself by turns as a lyrical or epic poet, a tender or licentious story-teller, full of imagination or sentiment, or humour or joviality." M. Legouis shows the liveliest sympathy with Chaucer at his best, when "by choosing an English subject he made himself a European poet." But he shows it also in tracing each stage of Chaucer's development, in noticing, for example, an "irresistible tendency to familiarity" in the personal ballads, and in connecting with his attempt to express "the poetical beauty of French verse," his bringing a glad light of day to men, the characteristic love of the word "clear," which gives, as its French form did to the "Chanson de Roland," a lucid atmosphere to his work. In the end he gives his opinion that "amongst writers of genius the one who strikes us soonest as a friend is Chaucer," though "exiled for his sin of humour from the highest regions of poetry"; or should it not rather be said that, though a frequent visitor to those regions, he was content to dwell outside them?

SHAKESPEARIAN ADDRESSES. Edited by LIEUT.-COL. FISHWICK. London: Sherratt and Hughes. 1912.

These addresses, delivered to a Bohemian club in Manchester by various members, have been edited in a kindly manner by Col. Fishwick, with an introduction giving some history of the club. But kindly as he is, he reminds us, and members of the Arts Club in particular, that "Shakespeare is still like a vast ocean unexplored—and not another quarter of a century's addresses will have completed its exploration." Few of the essayists, except perhaps Sir Edward Russell writing of "The Religion of Shakespeare," aims at exhaustiveness. Thus Mr. George Milner writes on "Shakespeare's Method of Work," Mr. William Wade on "Shakespeare as a Playwright," Mr. T. R. Wilkinson on "Shakespeare's Era and his Contemporaries," Mr. W. A. Balmforth on "Shakespeare's Humanity," the Editor on "Shakespeare's London." The writers might say, as the chorus says, in the "Shakespearian Cantata,"

written and composed for the Arts Club celebration of Shakespeare's birthday in 1890, and printed at the end of this volume:—

> And where the fadeless wreaths are strown
> On his great shrine we place our own;
> The flowers it bears have humble birth,
> And reverence lends them all their worth;
> Yet honour though they may not give,
> For him alone they bloom and live.

They are reverent and they have woven a wreath as various perhaps as it is fading.

THE FLOWER OF GLOSTER. By E. TEMPLE THURSTON. Williams and Norgate. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

This is an idyll of the English canals. Mr. Temple Thurston has discovered what few people have yet realised, that railways arrived in time to rob waterways of their anticipated commercial importance, and that consequently middle England is filled with quiet, placid, bird-haunted rivers made by the hand of man. Half a century of sleep has obliterated all trace of the navvy—the very word no longer recalls the robust makers of canals—and the towpath now winds its way through sleepy old-world villages and half-forgotten towns. Mr. Thurston hired a barge for his holiday, and passed enviable days amid the ancient inns, the half-timbered houses, and the old-world rustics of these modern backwaters. There is no need of this writer to say that he handles adequately such picturesque material. Yet one word of remonstrance may perhaps be hazarded. We refer to an unnecessary use of expletives. And the expletives—curiously enough—are not in the main those of the bargees he meets. They are his own. The book, as we say, is an idyll. Idylls and expletives do not mingle well.

The sketches by Mr. W. R. Dakin add value to an unusually well-printed record of an English holiday.

A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE: 1780–1830. In Two Vols. By OLIVER ELTON. Arnold. 21*s.* net.

THERE can be no question about three things. First, the importance of the period covered in these two volumes by Professor Elton; second, the indefatigable labour its mere writing must have cost him, to say nothing of the immense reading that lies behind it; and third, the completeness of his record. In the effort to "coin funny nicknames for the stars of night," many names have been invented for the period he surveys: the Romantic Revival is one, and the Renascence of Wonder is another, while Professor Elton himself speaks of the "convalescence of the feeling for beauty." It eludes them all, though the last is simpler, and so more comprehensive, than the others. It might perhaps be spoken of as the Return of Poetry. Poetry in the age preceding had not only been banished from immetrical language, but it had escaped from metre itself; and nothing can better illustrate the age, for the mere rhythms of metre are in themselves often sufficient to conjure down poetry into their entanglements. But after Gray and Collins, poetry, not content with its proper temple in verse, overflowed into prose, creating new forms and rhythms in each. It is a considerable fault in Professor Elton's volumes that both Gray and Collins are excluded by the dates he forcibly sets down, whereas Crabbe, by the fact of his inclusion, gets an altogether disproportionate attention. The stream began, in so far as any stream can be said to begin anywhere, with Collins's *Odes* of 1747; and it flowed past, and influenced, rather than included, Crabbe. It does not avail to say that the survey was only intended for the years between the dates as given. That seems to beg the question, for the dates were chosen to express something, and we suggest that, since they fail to express it, a somewhat laxer treatment would have been preferable.

That, however, is a minor fault in a careful and exhaustive piece of

work. Professor Elton's very completeness makes it exceedingly difficult to speak of his books. It certainly makes it impossible to treat them at all adequately. He does not stick only by the better known names—the names that justly speaking, make the period what it is. There is scarcely a writer between the fifty years he is concerned with that he does not mention. There is scarcely a book that he has not read. His method is to take the greater names, each in a chapter by itself, and then to dispatch the names of lesser consequence by battalions in chapters under suitable headings. Most of these latter chapters, it is true, have a tendency to become mere catalogues of performances, many of the performances being of indifferent skill and interest. Furthermore, their very form as a catalogue of names, with brief summaries of what those names imply, are inclined to make one lose sight of very real differences. The division we have spoken of looks as though Professor Elton had divided his men and women into those of front rank and those of second rank. Some method had, of course, to be employed, and that is the fault of this particular method. It imposes an injustice on those of the second rank. What Professor Elton has to say, for example, of Chatwin is very wise, and one could have hoped that it would draw attention to his work in the unnecessary neglect that has come to it; but we doubt whether he will be much noticed among a host of negligible writers under the heading, "The Novel of Suspense."

It is a cheap consolation to a writer to say that his work is so good that it deserves criticism, although there is much of truth in the saying. Let us say at once, therefore, that Professor Elton's volumes, as a record as a whole of a period scarcely second in variety and importance of performance to the Elizabethan outburst itself, are a solid achievement, and display a width of sympathy conterminous with the range of his survey. If they lose a sense of proportion in what they include, that is not so much a fault as the defect of a virtue. An example of his method of treatment is to be found in the chapter on De Quincey. He says: "Though Lamb works by condensation, by intensity, by sudden and piercing traits, and herein has no rival. De Quincey's stroke of wing is slower, longer, more sustained and leisuredly, and if at times it is dilatory and feeble, he covers in the end a great space of country"; and he adds, "it is De Quincey's honour that, whether he failed or triumphed, the 'continuous, the sustained, and the elaborate' were ever his artistic ambition." This steady refusal to take sides, to demand of one artist what was a virtue in another (and would have been, conceivably, a vice in him), is an excellent example of his procedure. That prose triumvirate, Lamb, De Quincey, and Hazlitt, receives a round and impartial praise, however mutually exclusive its constituents might seem to be. Blake and Keats, Shelley and Scott the poet, are searched, each of them, and equally, for his particular merit of song, and praised or condemned by his success or failure in that. It is, of course, the only sane method; but it is a method not easy to discover in a day of petty censors. The result is that, despite the width of his canvas, each figure is painted with understanding, save, perhaps, Wordsworth, where something is lacking. As an example of this, we can instance the chapter on Shelley. For those who, finding not what they themselves have sought, but hearing the critics in what they think to be their own judgments, have conceived of Shelley as a wild and irresponsible soul "somewhat lacking root in homely earth," Professor Elton should come as a necessary awakening. There never was a shrewder, more alert brain than Shelley's. His political sagacity, in the light of after events, was astonishing; and his sound common sense would be a salutary ingredient in the minds of some modern men of practical affairs. Though this is not stated as emphatically as it might be in Professor Elton's pages, yet it is there, and it is an evidence of his understanding and independence of judgment. That judgment is displayed consistently throughout these nine hundred odd pages in many penetrating *obiter dicta*. The two volumes should be often turned down for reference and assistance.

SIRENICA. By W. COMPTON LEITH. John Lane.

There is a flavour of the Hydriotaphia in these scholarly pages of Mr. Compton Leith. They resolve themselves into a sumptuous discourse, which traces the influence of the Sirens athwart the ages—of the Sirens, that is, as our author conceives them. According to him, they are the beguiling voices that lead man astray from the ordered path of duty into the realms of fancy or adventure; they articulate the yearning for that *Imagined Better Thing* which lies forever beyond his grasp. The wistful melancholy in the marbles of Scopas—the revolt from reason of all poets and dreamers: what is it but the mischief of those old sea-maidens wrought upon the mortals who have had the folly, or the daring, to listen to their deathless song? The Sirens are the Spirit of Romance, unyielding adversaries of all that is practical and sober in human life. . . . 'Tis a pretty conceit, and artfully elaborated.

THE RELIGION OF THE OPEN MIND. By ADAM GOWANS WHYTE, B.Sc. Watts and Co. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

In twelve admirable chapters Mr. Whyte sets forth what he calls the religion of the Open Mind. It is a plea for sanity, for a reasonable view of human life—a terse, modest, and truthful statement of our present knowledge in regard to man and the universe. Books like this cannot fail to purify our outlook and dissipate the cobwebs of mediævalism that still cling about our national habits. Every intelligent boy and girl ought to have a copy of it, for, complex as the subject is, Mr. Whyte has a rare gift of lucid exposition. The little volume ends with a message of hope drawn, not from the prospect of a state of bliss after death, but from the demonstrated fact that man, in proportion as he makes himself more and more acquainted with the laws that govern his environment, attains to a higher state of morality, comfort, and happiness. Mr. Eden Phillpotts contributes a discriminating and straightforward introduction.

GEORGE DU MAURIER. By MARTIN WOOD. Chatto and Windus. 7*s.* 6*d.*

It is amusing to run through this book and dwell on the forty-one illustrations which amused our fathers and those of us who were old enough to remember the works of the author of *Trilby*. They have an historical interest, sociologically at least, because, like Max Beerbohm, du Maurier was not only a satirist and a draughtsman, but also a man of the pen, with an artistic outlook and the caustic touch of the Bohemian. Let us be thankful that this is no mere work of dismal adulation. Mr. Martin Wood criticises and explains du Maurier on the whole without undue bias. Du Maurier, we see now, had very serious limitations as well as prejudices. He was in all essentials an artist, quite a musician in his way, an admirable amateur actor, a satirist, and an entirely delightful personality. A Victorian, he was never vulgar, and though these pictures reflect the artificial sentimentality of the Dickens tradition, he yet managed to depict the manners of his time in a way that will make his work live.

THE VICTORIAN AGE IN LITERATURE. By G. K. CHESTERTON. Williams and Norgate. 1*s.* net.

The Editors of the Home University Library have themselves taken the unusual course of criticising this book, by declaring, in a forward Note, that they "wish to explain that this book is not put forward as an authoritative history of Victorian literature. It is a free and personal statement of views and impressions about the significance of Victorian literature made by Mr. Chesterton at the Editors' express invitation." Certainly it is a free and personal book. A book that refers to Hardy as "a sort of village atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot," to give a sample of its personal statements, certainly cannot be taken as an authoritative history; and so it fails to fill its place in the

admirable library of which it forms a part. But those readers who deduce from this that the book is one that can be, and had better be, neglected, will make a great mistake. Its great fault, from another point of view, is also its virtue; for it avoids the colourless course of most histories, and forces one to examine, and even to reconstitute, one's values of the multifarious achievements of the writers of the time. It is a series of striking summaries; and though many of them may miss fire, many more of them illuminate their subject with peculiar vividness. Indeed (and this is the odd paradox about Chesterton) he seems to illuminate most when he most seems to miss fire. In our hot disagreements with him—even in our angry protests at some of the things he says—we find that we are, nevertheless, all the time reconstructing our values; and therefore are being constantly submitted to his influence. Certain it is that no one will remain the same after reading this book, be it history or be it what we will. Those who dislike change will avoid it; but the robust, whatever the inclination, will buffet in its waters, and come out greatly invigorated.

TOWARDS A NEW THEATRE. By GORDON CRAIG. Dent. 21s.

It is no good asking what does Craig mean, because, like a true artist, he probably does not know himself. His work is still tentative, and though he tells us he has seen the summit of the mountain, he is careful to classify his work in stages through which he has passed—the curtain, the screen, stages—and seems constitutionally unable to "precise" his ideas under any formula or rule. And this is logical enough, for it is the freedom of the theatre towards which he is groping, a freedom from all the other arts, a theatre evolved out of itself, synthetic, harmonious, a whole. Here, too, doubt is justified. For the scenic art, the architectonics of stage production, can never rank before the word as we still know the modern play, and so much is this so that men like Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw need no scenery at all, so forcible is their own presentation of illusion, or what other name one pleases to give the vitality of dramatic art. On the other hand, Hamlet, Macbeth require scenery, as romance necessarily demands its setting, and here Craig is unquestionably finding some splendid truths and possibilities. Take the trilogy of the Steps. It is obvious that the artist is grappling with the problem of the vitality of matter. Almost the thing is splendidly successful. The staircase is moody—it has idea, even movement, whereas the figures upon them seem quite unimportant, as is the law in a world which is eternally young. Jacob's ladder was never half so real as that staircase. The imagination soars above realism; we have the illusion of suggestion; we feel, we think. One cannot help asking, however, whether Craig in his passionate search for freedom is not threatening the freedom of other branches of the theatre, its literary side as distinct from its emotional. He seems inclined to create his effects too much from the dictates of personal judgment, which must obviously be often arbitrary. The commentary illustrating this sumptuous volume shows that, and it is evidenced by his design of a great pillar for the witches' scene in Macbeth, where the mingling of literary and artistic talent seem to have led to discord. That is his danger. There is a lot of the Puritan in Craig. For to give us a new theatre, he must be fiercely and exclusively an artist of production. To kill the playwright would be to kill the goose. And we want the golden eggs, all of them. Most particularly we want what Craig is striving for—a free theatre, a place of beauty and nobility.

FICTION

STEPHEN COMPTON. By J. E. PATTERSON. Heinemann. 6s.

A novel of real power by an author who has obviously come to grips with life, and writes out of the fruits of an experience chastened yet unembittered. Lacking though, as it is, in the fine graces and delicacies

of thought and convention, the book is less admirable when treating of those phases of social existence which are established in luxury and idleness. The picture of the young Socialist, Steve, is an admirable thing, burning, vital, with all that curious mixture of sensitiveness and crudity we look for in prophets of the people. The sociological part of the tale is treated with a sympathy and thoroughness that remind one of Mr. Wells at his best.

A little more humour, a little grace—but that were perhaps asking too much of a book obviously written out of the author's heart.

THE CALL OF THE SIREN. By HAROLD SPENDER. Mills and Boon. 6*s*.

A novel in which every chapter is prefaced with a quotation, generally in poetry, perplexes the reader, for the query naturally arises: was the chapter written to the quotation, or *vice versâ?* Mr. Spender's novel has this rather irritating habit. Otherwise it is a good tale of a mildly melodramatic order.

HELENA BRETT'S CAREER. By DESMOND COKE. Chapman and Hall. 6*s*.

One is not sure, first of all, whether Mr. Coke's novel is an elaborate satire on the mechanical methods of the fiction-writers for the sixpenny magazines, but it is borne in on one as the story proceeds that it is no satire but the thing itself. For the class of people who carry this love of fiction to the point of insisting on an almost entire absence of reality in the *personae* and characterisation of a novel, "Helena Brett's Career" may be recommended. But such inhuman abstraction must be chilling to the average reader. Mr. Coke's characters are the types of rather old-fashioned farce. If the book had humour it would indeed be a tolerable farce. Maybe it was meant to be, but the author who has scouted subtlety in all the other qualities of his book, has made a mistake if he has used it here.

THE CLAY'S REVENGE. By HELEN GEORGE. Stephen Swift. 6*s*.

By the clay is meant that element of the beast which resides, dormant or otherwise, in most of us. This story concerns itself with the rousing of the beast, and is almost pathological in its treatment of him. We may be taken as complimentary or the reverse when, having regard to the trend of modern fiction, we say that it would only have been written by a woman.

SIMON BRANDIN. By B. PAUL NEUMAN. John Murray. 6*s*.

A hero and heroine, victims of Jew persecution, with natural hatred of the Russian Government. The hero becomes associated in a half-hearted way with the secret associations who fight persecution with assassination. The usual beautiful female Nihilist flits luridly across the story, and does promptly and thoroughly the deed that Simon had been fingering about all his life. Lastly, the eyes of Simon and his ward are opened as to their feelings for one another, and they decide to leave vengeance and the guidance of national destiny in other and stronger hands.

But all this kind of thing has been told before, and told exceedingly well, and we cannot see the reason why Mr. Neuman should have essayed to do it again.

THE NET. By REX BEACH. Hodder and Stoughton. 6*s*.

An excellent story dealing with the Mafia, terrible and most subtle of brigand secret societies.

MALAYAN MONOCHROMES. By Sir HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G. John Murray. 6*s*.

Another volume of reminiscences and tales and studies in native temperament from that further East which our author knows and can describe so well. There are twelve of them here, all original, and yet all, or nearly all, infected with that *explanatory* method which he insists

upon adopting, to the detriment, as we think, of the inherent excellence of his material. But we must not complain, for the book contains some of the best of Sir Hugh Clifford's sketches—the first, for example, "The Confession of the Outlaw, Mat Arif," or that other one, "The Quest of the Golden Fleece," whose grimly fantastic realism it would be hard to beat.

THE VILLAGE IN THE JUNGLE. By L. S. WOOLF. Edward Arnold. 5*s*. net.

Mr. Woolf unfolds before us the vision of a native settlement buried in the jungle of Ceylon, remote from the traffic of men. The soil is bad, the rains deficient, and only once every six years or so are the water-tanks full and the paddy-fields so green that the poor cultivators may anticipate the joy of a belly-full of rice. At other times, half-starving, they sow their chenas—meagre tracts of land, wrested from the jungle that broods patiently all around, ever ready to swallow up the ephemeral works of man in its frenzied tangle of greenery. This is a straightforward tale, contrived without any great literary pretension. But the pictures of these poor cultivators—a resigned prey of usurers, tortuous in their thoughts and dealings, obsessed by imaginary devils and a dark fatalism—are drawn from life; Silendu, the hunter, and his women-folk, the headman of the village, the nondescript trader, Fernando, will be recognised as types by all who have lived in these woodlands. The author knows his Ceylon, and has given us a refreshingly truthful book.

WIDECOMBE FAIR. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. Murray. 6*s*.

With *Widecombe Fair* and its two companion volumes, one of which is to be published this year, the other in 1914, Mr. Phillpotts completes his "comedy of Dartmoor, planned more than twenty years ago." It is only when we turn to the long list of novels facing the title page that we realise how many acts that comedy has run to. In a modest foreword Mr. Phillpotts speaks sanely and with great good taste of his own work, asking the critic to judge it as a whole, "and from no fragment." It is still more difficult to judge of *Widecombe Fair* from this, which is only the first instalment of it. As Mr. Phillpotts himself says, "it is an attempt to view a village in a single stroke; and at the elevation needed for such a survey, only the sound of laughter is heard." Yet, if we listen attentively, quite other sounds reach us through this gaiety. There are scenes, like that of the interrupted burial rites of the bastard child of Margery Reep, which, if they are comedy at all, are comedy of a very grim kind. Mr. Phillpotts is not a great artist, but he is a sincere one, and there is much good work in *Widecombe Fair*. It is a striking sign of the author's power that the book, though fragmentary and formless, holds our attention and interest all through. The stage is a large one, and it is perhaps a little overcrowded. Among the many characters the bizarre figure of Nicky Glubb stands out as a genuine creation, and one wishes that Mr. Phillpotts had given us a little more of him, and a little less of some of the other people.

INEFFECTUAL FIRES. By E. M. SMITH-DAMPIER. Melrose. 6*s*.

This, which we believe to be the author's second novel, is a story of the eighteenth century, and Sir Joshua Reynolds figures as one of the minor characters, while Horace Walpole hovers, unseen, in the background. It is the history of the failure of Benedict Shaw, an artist. We see him first in his native village, a youth of picturesque appearance, with a face "haggard as a lifeless field," and "cavernous eyes." We see him last, the victim in a drunken brawl, lying dead beneath the walls of the Strozzi Palace. The plot is tragic, but the story strikes the note of romantic melodrama rather than that of true tragedy. If we might hazard a word of advice to its author, it would be to read and re-read

that austere masterpiece, *L'Education Sentimentale.* The study of Benedict Shaw is lacking in intimacy, and his story is developed too jerkily. That he should, morally, go to pieces so very easily and rapidly seems hardly consistent with what we are told about him in the earlier chapters. The tale really exists for its portrait of Sabina Blanchflower, an original and convincing figure. The book is carefully written, though at times with a certain naïveté and stiltedness, particularly in the dialogues; while the phrase, "I protest," recurs with somewhat irritating frequency.

CRITICAL

A CANDID HISTORY OF THE JESUITS. By JOSEPH MCCABE. Nash.

So many contradictory, false, and exaggerated statements are made about the Jesuits that a candid history of "The Society of Jesus" is very welcome, and at this moment, where there is evidence of a Catholic revivalism in England, it has come at the right moment, filling a public want. The author has tried to be impartial, and on the whole he has succeeded beyond expectation. This is no work of bias, no case of special pleading. It is a plain statement of facts so far as they are ascertainable about a body which has always worked in complete secrecy. Mr. McCabe does full justice to the young soldier, Loyola, the founder of the Society, and the account of this man's early struggles, his fortitude and energy are extraordinarily interesting. Indeed, throughout, the splendid enthusiasm, courage, and unconquerable spirit of the "Black Fathers" are cheerfully admitted by Mr. McCabe, and, where possible, he gives them the full benefit of the doubt in most cases of regicide, and murder of Pope or commoner, their complicity in the Bartholomew massacre, and similar "Christian" deeds in the name of Jesus, though not in the Gunpowder Plot, because there the guilt of Father Gerard was proved, and he himself suffered the penalty. The result is an astonishing history of personal courage and activity, a record which has no parallel of service rendered to a cause which, under the Cross of Catholicism, was almost from its beginnings systematically anti-Papal and anti-Catholic, and invariably anti-social, anti-national and reactionary in all matters of liberty, education, science and progress. Though this black army never numbered more than 25,000 actual Fathers, they worked their way into every country of Europe, ruled almost every country in turn, obtained hold of nearly all the universities, got into every Court, and spread to the end of the globe. The story of their peregrinations in Asia is sheer romance—indeed, romance and the melodramatic instinct have always been their characteristics. Centuries ago they were in Japan, China, India, South America, Burma, Turkey; two Fathers even penetrated into Llassa, in Thibet, a hundred and fifty years before Captain Younghusband—and always they persevered, and always they amassed enormous fortunes, and always, when driven out, they returned. Quite indefatigable, these "black birds"! Their history is as romantic as the wildest tale of pirate adventure.

The reason of the Jesuits' success has been secrecy and intrigue. They have been the most astute diplomatists known in history, intriguers first, priests afterwards, with the cunning of the commercial genius a close third. Working always in the dark, they have always proved too dark for Popes, Kings, and Governments. With their philosophy of casuistry, their doctrine of "Probabilism," their methods of the "means justifying the end," they have always been able to seize upon the weak side of man and turn it to account. With wealthy widows their success has been invariable. Fastening always on the rich—we have them at Farm Street—they have sucked them like leeches. The Confessional naturally gave them the means to get at queens and kings, as their educational propaganda drew the interest of the rich, and—when necessary—their fanatical work among the poor disarmed the people's animosity.

Yet when all is said and done, what have they accomplished? Positively, nothing. Their persistent intrigues were behind Philip of Spain, Alva, all the persecuting reactionary movements of Catholicism. The idea that they supported learning is utterly false. They were the sworn foes of enlightenment always, the best proof of which is the fact that in the countries where they have always been the strongest—Spain and Portugal—illiteracy is more pronounced than anywhere west of Russia, whereas England, France and Germany, who shook them off, are the most advanced. No great mind has ever risen from their ranks, with the exception of some theological controversialists. Their schools in Spain to-day are infamous. They have stood against Liberty in every shape. Their existence has been a continual source of intrigue, reaction and oppression. Wonderful in their office, they have been the red hand in civilisation.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. By F. W. WORSLEY, M.A., B.D. Chapman & Hall. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

There is a calm absoluteness about the title of this book which will raise a question in the minds of most readers, and a smile on the lips of some; considering the wide diversities of opinion on matters theological within the Established Church—considering the distance which divides, say, Bishop Moule from Bishop Gore, and both from Bishop Percival—who exactly is in a position to expound for us authoritatively "the theology of the Church of England"? Mr. Worsley, as a matter of fact, has furnished us with an able exposition of the High Anglican view, as held by those who maintain that "the Church of England was never Roman Catholic," notwithstanding the fact that from the day of Augustine to the time of the Reformation it was customary for English ecclesiastics to appeal to the Pope, thus acknowledging his supremacy and jurisdiction. Given the author's standpoint, however, it must be said that his volume is instructive, temperately written, and likely to be of use as a compendious statement. He is, of course, occasionally rather hard put to it to reconcile his Catholic doctrines with the Thirty-Nine Articles, as when, *e.g.*, he contends for the lawfulness of Prayers for the Departed in the face of the Twenty-Second Article's emphatic denial of Purgatory; and to say that the word Mass is "*still* very generally used" in the Church of England is scarcely accurate, seeing that the term has only of late years crept back into use. We could wish that Mr. Worsley had not yielded to the temptation to indulge in the sneer at Dr. Hastings Rashdall which disfigures his preface; we assure him that there is all the difference between "ceasing to believe in the Atonement" and ceasing to believe in certain crude views about the Atonement, to which alone Canon Rashdall refers as likely to repel men from going to church.

WINDS OF DOCTRINE: STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY OPINION. By G. SANTAYANA. Dent & Sons. 6*s.* net.

It is impossible in a brief notice to do more than give some slight indication to the reader of what he may expect to find in this brilliant and suggestive little book. And first of all we hasten to assure him that, thanks to the clearness of Professor Santayana's style, it may be read with pleasure by any intelligent person. Professor Santayana is gifted with a delightful humour that in its kindly irony recalls at times that of Anatole France. Like the author of *Le Jardin d'Epicure,* he is a sceptic, and the criticism he brings to bear upon life and philosophy is, for the most part, destructive. This is, perhaps, particularly in evidence in the essay on "The Intellectual Temper of the Age," and in that upon "The Philosophy of Henri Bergson." Professor Santayana is rather unkind to M. Bergson. His account of the philosophy of Mr. Bertrand

Russell is more sympathetic, though even of this latter he says: "It needs to be very largely supplemented and much ripened and humanised before it can be called satisfactory or wise." The essay on Shelley is subtle and original, and worth a thousand of those vaguely æsthetic appreciations which that unfortunate poet seems principally to have inspired. The last paper, on "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," contains a penetrating criticism of the American genius, and a delicate and charming appreciation of William James. Professor Santayana has the lightest of touches, and we have not for a long time come across a book so attractive and so stimulating as *Winds of Doctrine*.

FRENCH PROPHETS OF YESTERDAY: A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE. By ALBERT LEON GUÉRARD. Unwin. 12*s*. 6*d*. net.

This is an able and exhaustive survey of French religious thought in the nineteenth century, beginning with Chateaubriand and Joseph de Maistre, and ending with Renan. The author himself explains the origin of his book as an attempt "to interpret for our English and American friends that aspect of French thought which they find hardest to sympathise with." Nobody could be fairer or more dispassionate in his judgments than M. Guérard. His sympathies, to be sure, are not with materialism; yet he is at pains to do the materialists justice. M. Guérard sees no possibility of France returning to the Church, but, on the other hand, he finds that his countrymen are weary of rationalism, and the book ends with an attempt to picture a possible religion of the future, which will arise from a blending of science and humanitarianism. Scattered here and there through the book there is a good deal of literary criticism, sometimes very acute, as in the estimate of Baudelaire. One welcomes the tribute to Alfred de Vigny, but we think M. Guérard underrates Taine, and overrates the importance of Hello, and certainly that of Barbey d'Aurevilly. Barbey was a fine old gentleman, but really he had very little talent, and not a great deal of intelligence. We remember once, after reading Huysmans' eulogy of him in *A Rebours*, wasting 2*s*. 8*d*. on *Les Diaboliques*, in the vain expectation of getting a thrill from that amazingly silly and puerile work. The chapter on Renan is perhaps the best in the book.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY. By GEORGES CHATTERTON-HILL, Ph.D. A. and C. Black. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

This is a case where a gratuitously false premiss goes far to vitiate an otherwise interesting and well-written treatise. The false premiss, airily announced in the author's preface, states that "the great mass of educated people are perfectly convinced of the absolute uselessness of all discussion concerning so-called 'dogmatic truths,'" with the implication that it is possible to treat Christianity simply from the point of view of sociology, while regarding its religious content as mere husk. But "the great mass of educated people" are convinced of nothing of the kind; and Christianity having achieved, shall we say, a modest vogue during the nineteen centuries of its existence, as a system of religious truths, it is rather too late in the day to persuade us, as this American writer attempts to do with characteristic confidence, that what is really vital in the teaching of Jesus is His social doctrine, while the rest can be remitted or dismissed as a negligible quantity. And it is really naïve of Dr. Chatterton-Hill to sing the praises of the Roman Church as an integrating social force, superior to Protestantism, when at the same time he will have nothing to do with Roman dogma—as though the two did not stand and fall together. Having said so much, it is fair to state that the author has much that is both of interest and of value to say on such topics as

Fraternity *versus* Equality, Struggle and Suffering, the Supreme Dignity of Labour, Marriage and Family Life, &c. May we hint that his habit of quoting the words of Jesus in Latin strikes us as a quaint affectation? Those for whom he writes would probably understand his quotations quite as well if they were given in the original Greek; on the other hand, there is quite a fair English translation available.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL PROGRESS. By J. WILSON HARPER, D.D. James Nisbet and Co. 5*s.* net.

Dr. Harper's acknowledged eminence as a student of sociology will ensure a ready welcome for this thoughtful and stimulating volume, which in modest compass covers a great deal of ground, and deals with a supremely important subject in a lucid and helpful manner. The chapter devoted to a criticism of Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's ethics is particularly valuable, and in his twenty pages on Bergson the author makes a real contribution to a reasoned estimate of that brilliant thinker's philosophy.

TIME AND CHANGE. By JOHN BURROUGHS. Constable. 4*s.* 6*d.* net.

Here is a small volume, full of profound and mellow teaching. Mr. Burroughs, the American naturalist, has gone to mother earth and her rocky covering for inspiration; his geological studies have trained his mind to think rigorously and along independent lines. This is the creed of the man who has pondered in solitude, watching wild natural forces at work, and thinking upon their significance: "Science has atrophied his faith, but it has softened his heart." Open the pages where you will, and you will find them fired with a constructive imagination and a very real love of humanity. By way of criticism, we would like to observe that, in our opinion, he is rather prone to treat words like *nature* and *evolution* as if these were entities. "How like an inventor Nature has worked!" he says; and, on the next page, "Evolution touches all forms, but tarries with few." Now this comfortable and old-fashioned kind of language will do very well for true sages like our author; they may use such terminology, because they know what it stands for. But it is likely to mislead the outsider into thinking that "nature" is something other than the summary of our terrestrial experiences, and "evolution" more than merely one of its aspects.

POETRY AND DRAMA

THE VENTURERS AND OTHER POEMS. By VIVIAN LOCKE ELLIS. 21 York Buildings, Adelphi.

It was very interesting to pick up this volume almost by chance, and turning casually over the pages to find the attention arrested by musical and dignified lines. Studying it more carefully, we found that there was not a single poem in it which failed to give some pleasure and yield some beauty. There was a kind of stately deliberation in rhythm and diction according well with the mood, the emotion, or the pondered idea which each poem expresses. It is quite possible to read some of these poems through for the mere pleasure of the sound without fully grasping the meaning; but when we read more attentively we find that the emotion or imaginative idea behind it was a real one—we may feel less impressed by the language, but we are convinced that the poem is a record of fine experience. That is to say, it is poetry in a very real sense of the term; it is sincere; it is an expression of something that the poet really means, and it is poetical expression. Occasionally the meaning is in a slight degree obscure, but on examination it proves to be not the obscurity of vagueness, but of an elusive thought or feeling which resists direct expres-

sion. Others are perfectly clear, like that first poem in the book, which begins :—

"In northern nature where the stream
Atlantic flows and far
Earth's Celtic shores resound beneath
Orion's droning star,
The cloudy havens and sweet-famed
Isles of the English are."

And the Nocturne beginning :—

"Ye sentries of the amber moon,"

presents to us with meditative charm and stillness an experience of night which only poetry of a high order could recall.

"The Travellers in Styx" may seem to be couched in language too Miltonic. But the language is sustained by the philosophical idea which suggested the poem, and by the imagination which informs it. Mr. Ellis's poems are full of ideas, and yet it is always the imaginative aspect of ideas which prompts him—it is only when ideas are transfused into emotion that they can yield poetry, and Mr. Ellis understands the medium in which he works. In this book it is true he does not produce lines or stanzas of that amazing felicity which belongs to genius. But the level is always high, and the undercurrent is strong enough to attract and move.

TRAVEL

WAYFARING IN FRANCE, FROM AUVERGNE TO THE BAY OF BISCAY. By EDWARD HARRISON BARKER. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

Anyone going on foot through picturesque foreign country, with an open eye and an open mind, content to set down things day by day exactly as they happened, can make a book that will be sufficiently enthralling to those who have never left their own fireside, and whose curiosity has never been stirred by questions concerning the psychology of race and its relation to climatic and political conditions. Mr. Barker has that open eye and that open mind, and he sets down what he saw with clearness, vigour, and unfailing good temper, without bothering overmuch as to the coherence of his narrative, or the worth of the facts recorded. He speaks of plants "which flourish where the foot of man has never trod," thereby revealing a literary manner and a mental outlook which belong to a time when railways were still a wonder, and woodcutting was—as mainly in this volume—the chief means of reproduction for the press.

DREAM CITIES : NOTES OF AN AUTUMN TOUR IN ITALY AND DALMATIA. By DOUGLAS GOLDRING. Fisher Unwin. 8*s.* 6*d.* net.

Cheery are these travel-sketches of Mr. Goldring, though why any of the towns he saw should be called a Dream-City is not quite apparent. He certainly makes them seem real enough. The book records a trip over Trieste into Dalmatia and Montenegro, and home again *viâ* Milan and Modane—a trip which has given Mr. Goldring the opportunity of telling us a number of pleasant things about the places he visited, and of displaying his amiable outlook upon things in general. There are good photographic illustrations. Cheery, very cheery! A man who can write affectionately of the French station officials at Modane—well, he certainly belongs to the large-hearted type of mortal.

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